



RMC
Rural Maryland Council

Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report



Rural Maryland Council
in recognition of
the celebration of the 25th Anniversary of the Rural Maryland Council.
Your combined efforts and dedication in improving the quality and
preserving the rural areas of Maryland are commendable.
Congratulations!

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MR. PRESIDENT	HAYES	PINSKY
AUGUSTINE	HERSHEY	READY
BAILEY	HESTER	REILLY
BEIDLE	HETTLEMAN	ROSAPEPE
BENSON	HOUGH	SALLING
CAROZZA	JACKSON	SIMONAIRE
CARTER	JENNINGS	SMITH
CASSILLY	KAGAN	SYDNOR
CORDERMAN	KELLEY	WALDSTREICHER
ECKARDT	KING	WASHINGTON
EDWARDS	KLAUSMEIER	WEST
ELFRETH	KRAMER	YOUNG
ELLIS	LAM	ZUCKER
FELDMAN	LEE	
GALLION	MCCRAY	
GRIFFITH	PATTERSON	
GUZZONE	PETERS	



50 Harry S. Truman Parkway - Annapolis, Maryland 21401
rural.maryland.gov

To Our Fellow Marylanders:

As an independent state agency, the Council must report each year to the Governor and the Maryland General Assembly on its activities and grant expenditures. We are pleased to share with you the Rural Maryland Council's Fiscal Year 2021 Annual Report. The State's Fiscal Year began on July 1, 2020 and ended on June 30, 2021. This report documents the grant expenditures as well as the activities of the Council during this time.

This fiscal year was very important to the Rural Maryland Council, as it marked the 25th Anniversary of the RMC. In 1994, Governor William Donald Schaefer signed an executive order designating a "rural development council." The following year, the council organized itself as the "FORVM for Rural Maryland" and was permanently established by an act of the state legislature in 1995. Today - 25 years later - renamed the Rural Maryland Council (RMC), it continues to champion the causes of rural Marylanders while emphasizing the importance of working with suburban and urban communities to create a stronger, united Maryland.

Thanks to the support of Governor Hogan and the Maryland General Assembly, the Rural Maryland Council received full funding of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund in the amount of \$6,160,575 in the Fiscal Year 2021 State's Operating Budget. Along with the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund which received an additional \$158,650. These programs are investing in our state's rural communities, creating economic opportunities and improving the quality of life. A full list of grant awards is included within this report.

In Fiscal Year 2021, the Council received 179 grant applications requesting \$14,679,005 in funding. Overall, the Council expended the following:

- \$1,950,820 for the State's five regional councils
- \$848,311 for RMPIF Infrastructure projects
- \$892,134 for RMPIF Entrepreneurship projects
- \$923,898 for RMPIF Health Care projects
- \$669,015 for RMPIF-funded MAERDAF projects
- \$158,316 for MAERDAF projects



The RMC expended \$438,617.45 for operational expenses with the majority of funds (\$344,014.90) expended for salaries, wages and benefits for the four RMC staff members.

Looking Ahead

While the RMC had a successful 2021 fiscal year, there are many great plans for the upcoming 2022 fiscal year. One of which will be the biennial Rural Summit. This year's theme will be "Redefining Resilience and Recovery". Throughout the pandemic, rural communities remained resilient, with farmers and farm workers continuing to work everyday to assure that the nation would be provided with food, and many small rural businesses and services adapted to the pandemic changes to continue to operate.

Another exciting project for the upcoming year, is the RMC's partnership with the Regional Economic Studies Institute (RESI), located out of Towson University. RESI will conduct an economic impact analysis of the RMC's grant programs across the state of Maryland.

As always, everyone is welcome to join us at our meetings and gatherings whether in person or virtually. Thanks for all that you do to help us meet our vision of the future where all of Rural Maryland is prosperous with thriving resources, vibrant economies and healthy connected communities!

For our continued success,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Hartline".

John Hartline
RMC Chair

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Charlotte Davis".

Charlotte Davis
Executive Director

**For more information, visit RMC's website at www.rural.maryland.gov
50 Harry S. Truman Parkway, Annapolis, MD 21401 410.841.5772**

Executive Board Members

RMC Officers

- Chair - **John Hartline**, Executive Director of Tri County Council for Southern Maryland
- RMC Second Vice-Chair- **Chris Benzing**, Executive Director of the Maryland Rural Development Corporation
- First Vice-Chair - **Greg Padgham**, Executive Director of Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland

Executive Committee

- Joint Planning and Development Committee - **Mike Thielke**, Executive Director of Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center
- RMC Legislative Committee - **Lindsay Thompson** - Thompson Ag Consulting
- RMC Agriculture Committee - **Matthew Tefteau**, Government Affairs Manager of Choptank of Electric Cooperative
- RMPPIF Chair - **Susan O'Neill**, Executive Director of Upper Shore Regional Council
- Representing Rural Maryland Foundation- **Daniel Rider**, Maryland Forest Program Director of Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Immediate Past Chair - **Scott Warner**, Executive Director of Mid-Shore Regional Council
- University of Maryland Eastern Shore - **Dr. Heidi Anderson**, President of University of Maryland Eastern Shore

RMC Executive Board

Districts

- Representing District 1 (Garrett, Allegany and Washington Counties) - **Leslie Hart**, Washington County Economic Development
- Representing District 2 (Frederick, Carroll and Harford Counties) - **Elizabeth Chung**, Asian American Center of Frederick
- Representing District 3 (Charles, Calvert, and St. Mary's Counties) - **Chris Kaselemis**, -St. Mary's County Office Department of Economic Development
- Representing District 4 (Cecil, Kent and Queen Anne's Counties) - **Sam Shoge**, Kent County Economic Development
- Representing District 5 (Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties) **Debbie Bowden**, Caroline County Economic Development
- Representing District 6 (Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset Counties) - **Matt Holloway** ,Quantico Creek Sod Farm and Baywater Farm
- Representing For Profit Organizations - **Renee Sheehy**, Delmarva Power
- Representing State At-Large - **Bill Valentine**, Retired Allegany County Commissioner

Representing Maryland House of Delegates

- **The Honorable Mike McKay** - Delegate
- **The Honorable Sheree Sample-Hughes** - Delegate
- **The Honorable Brian Crosby** - Delegate

Representing Maryland Senate

- **The Honorable George Edwards** - Senator
- **The Honorable Douglas Peters** - Senator
- **The Honorable Katie Fry Hester** - Senator

Members

- Representing the Maryland Association of Counties **Jack Wilson**, Board of Commissioners, Queen Anne's County - **Wilbur Levengood**, Board of Commissioners, Caroline County
- Representing the Governor's Office - **Ryan Snow**, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs
- Representing Maryland Department of Commerce **Elizabeth Carven**, Regional Growth, and Retention
- Representing Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development - **Cindy Stone**, Department of Housing and Community Development
- Representing University of Maryland Extension - **James Hanson**, University of Maryland Extension
- Representing Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council - **Craig Hartsock**, Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council
- Representing Maryland Association of Community Action Agencies - **Santo Grande**, Maryland Association of Community Action Agencies
- Representing Delmarva Poultry Industry - **Holly Porter**, Delmarva Poultry Industry
- Representing Special Appointment - **Steve McHenry**, Maryland Agricultural & Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO)
- Representing Maryland Department of Agriculture- **Cassie Shirk** Maryland Department of Agriculture
- Representing Maryland Department of Natural Resources - **Bunky Luffman**, Maryland Department of Natural Resources
- Representing Tri-County Council for Western Maryland **Leanne Mazer**, Tri-County Council for Western Maryland
- Representing Maryland Forest Association -**Beth Hill**, Maryland Forests Association
- Representing Maryland Association of Public Library Administration - **John Venditta**, Maryland Association of Public Library Administration
- Representing the Maryland Municipal League - **John Kinnaird**, Mayor, Town of Thurmont and **Jamie Windon**, Commissioner, Talbot County

RMC Staff

- Executive Director - **Charlotte Davis**
- Program Administrator - **Megan D'Arcy**
- Program Coordinator - **Dakota Matthews**
- Administrative Assistant - **Amanda Clevenger**



Serving Rural Communities

In 1994, the Rural Maryland Council was initiated by the Governor as the Maryland Rural Development Council (Executive Order 01.01.1994.14) and then codified by statute in 1995 as the FORVUM for Rural Maryland. In July 2003 the FORVM restructured as the Rural Maryland Council.

Our **MISSION** is to bring together citizens, community-based organizations, federal, state, county and municipal government officials as well as representatives of the for-profit and nonprofit sectors to collectively address the needs of rural Maryland. The RMC is an independent state agency located within the Maryland Department of Agriculture. We provide a venue for members of agriculture and natural resource-based industries, health care facilities, educational institutions, businesses, economic and community development organizations, nonprofit entities and government agencies to cross traditional boundaries, share information and address in a holistic way the special needs and opportunities in rural Maryland.

Our **VISION** is a future where all of Rural Maryland is prosperous with thriving resources, vibrant economies and healthy connected communities.

Our Goals

- Encourage healthy, connected communities throughout Rural Maryland through the convening of stakeholders, education, public relations and advocacy.
- Support the development and growth of vibrant economies in rural Maryland and foster stewardship of Maryland's natural resources
- Maximize RMC outreach, resources and mission through financial and organizational development

What is Rural

Rural jurisdictions share common characteristics that set them apart from their suburban and urban counterparts, such as geographic isolation, lack of transportation, and lack of access to and availability of health care. The state definition of rural is articulated in the Annotated Code of Maryland and includes 18 of the 24 jurisdictions in Maryland. Each is represented on the Rural Maryland Council.

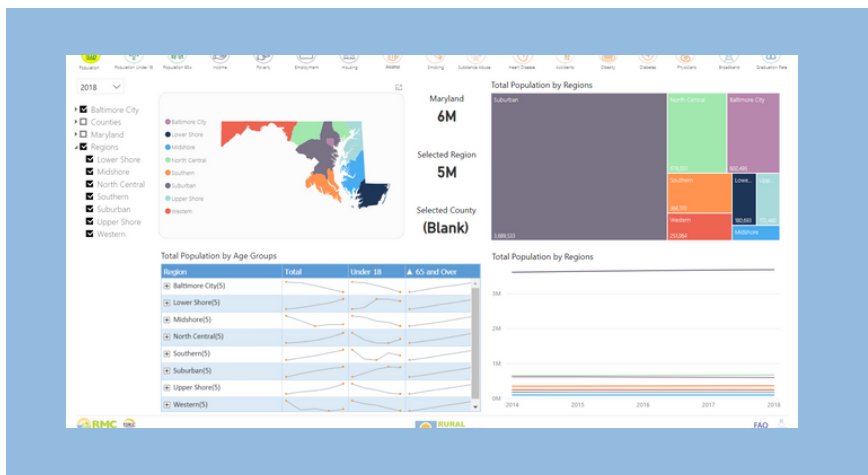
Updated Territory Map

The RMC recently updated its territory map. The data layers in this application can be used to view the rural, semi-rural, suburban, and urban areas in Maryland. In the future, there is hopes of integrating the RMC grants into the interactive map, allowing viewers to see the effectiveness of the RMC grants across the state

Service Territory

State Statute designates the following counties as rural: Allegany, Calvert, Caroline, Carroll, Cecil, Charles, Dorchester, Frederick, Garrett, Harford, Kent, Queen Anne's, Somerset, St. Mary's, Talbot, Washington, Wicomico, and Worcester





Rural Maryland Outlook is an interactive dashboard that is designed to showcase key demographics for each of the State's 18 designated rural communities as well as the six rural regions to communicate to policy and lawmakers on how rural regions in Maryland are doing individually both currently and overtime.

Visit this dashboard at rural.maryland.gov.

COVID-19 Impact

The RMC, along with the rest of Maryland, has continued to feel the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This has affected the many outreach events that the RMC would normally attend, as well as project site visits to our past RMPIF and MAERDAF awardees. Additionally, the RMC would also host and attend a value-added conference, as well as issue forums to educate the public about the issues currently facing rural Maryland. While COVID put a halt to our many in-person events, we have still managed to stay virtually connected throughout these times and have effectively continued to serve rural Maryland. This included hosting our annual Rural Maryland Day during the legislative session, hosting an outdoors grab and go lunch for the legislators, and many zoom calls and virtual meetings. While the RMC has adapted accordingly to the pandemic, we hope to be back in person for 2022.

Addressing Rural Issues

The Rural Maryland Council annually conducts a Rural Issues Survey to help the Council identify the concerns and challenges faced in Rural Maryland. The information collected helps recognize trends and target certain planning priorities for the coming year. The electronic survey was released in August 2020 to RMC members and stakeholders in the quarterly online newsletter, RMC website, and through email marketing. The survey contained six questions, the first 3 questions focused on demographics and the remaining 3 questions focused on rural issues. The survey received 252 responses. Survey responders were asked to choose their top three priorities out of a response list containing 15 concerns that best indicated the most important issues facing their community or field of interest. The top three priorities were Broadband, Workforce/Economic Development, and Poverty.

- 1) 43% Encouraging providers to install last mile broadband (109 responders)
- 2) 40% Maintaining existing businesses and recruiting new employers with good paying jobs (101 responders)
- 3) 23% Dealing with the effects of poverty and providing assistance to low-income families (60 responders)



Allegany County HRDC driver highlight photos from transportation services funded by RMC Grant



Photo from Small Business Development Center North Region

Information Sessions with Volunteer Maryland and Maryland Heritage Areas

On January 28th, February 18th and February 25th, the RMC and Volunteer Maryland held two-hour long information sessions about the programs and resources available, including RMC's Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) and Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF). Volunteer Maryland shared information on their AmeriCorp service training program, and the Maryland Heritage Area shared their grant information on projects in education/environment for qualifying organizations.

Managing For Results

Managing for Results (MFR) is a strategic planning, performance measurement, and budgeting process that emphasizes use of resources to achieve measurable results, accountability, efficiency, and continuous improvement in State government programs. The Council has been reporting MFRs annually since 2019 and measurements include: amount of matching funds secured, number of RMC MFRs submitted to the Maryland Department of Agriculture for FY2020.

Maryland Department of Agriculture MFR Master Worksheet									
Performance Measures	CODE	Actual 2016	Actual 2017	Actual 2018	Actual 2019	Actual 2020	Actual 2021	Estimated 2022	Estimated 2023
RMC									
Rural Population	M601	1,720,988	1,742,147	1,687,624	1,750,097	N/A	1,787,141	1,741,621	1,759,620
Rural per capita income	M602	\$31,782	\$33,736	\$34,887	N/A	N/A	\$36,095	\$ 34,906.00	\$ 35,296.00
Number of grant applications received	M603	57	138	172	175	178	140	164	160
Private sector dollars leveraged for rural development projects	M604	\$582,629	\$14,772,377	\$17,870,185	\$5,636,990	\$12,557,902	\$12,021,692	\$10,072,195	\$11,550,596
Number of attendees at biennial Rural Summit	M605	N/A	350	N/A	389	NA	370	NA	370
Rural unemployment rate	M606	6.60%	N/A	4.13%	N/A	7.74%	6.26%	6.05%	6.68%
Rate of broadband access in rural communities*	M607	64.00%	81.00%	81.00%	81.00%	81.00%	81.00%	NA	NA
Health care providers per 100K rural population	M608	4,712	4,407	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	NA	NA
Number of people trained/served/reached through RMC grants**	M609	N/A	6,902	22,356	18,755	44,161	1,683,640	582,185	769,995
Number of loans made with RMC grants**	M610	N/A	6	0	1	10	10	7	9
Total RMC funds invested in capital items***	M611	N/A	\$ 183,675	\$ 689,276	\$ 1,147,389	\$ 6,815,925	\$ 51,368,480***	\$ 4,777,265	\$ 5,987,023
Number of research and tools created and executed through RMC grants***	M612	N/A	6	9	9	41	87	46	58

*Denotes most recent publicly accessible information. Multiple studies are underway to update figures, which is why estimates were not provided.

**Actual numbers may change as 23% of Grantees were approved extensions due to the COVID-19 pandemic and 4% are missing reports, and 3% were granted in midyear and final reports are not due until end of the year.

***Denotes an unusually large match of \$45M related to the Talbot County Department of Public Works, Mistletoe Hall Commerce - Business Park project. Estimated numbers did not include this large match.



Lead Maryland. Class XI



Double Z Cowboy Corral Faulkner, MD. Pictured owner Dr. Rachel Cezar-Martinez. Photo provided by Steam Onward

Strategic Planning

During September of FY2021, the RMC Strategic Plan was formally adopted by the Board. The purpose of the Plan is to achieve the following set of goals in order to respond to the growing numbers of requests for help, and to address ever-changing social and economic challenges in Maryland's rural communities.

Goal 1 - Develop a plan for long-term financial sustainability.

Goal 2 - Encourage and facilitate active participation by RMC members to a) extend RMC's reach and influence and b) groom potential new board members.

Goal 3 - Make RMC more valuable to legislators and other key stakeholders.

Goal 4 - Develop protocols for responding to new opportunities that arise. The Council completed the goals laid out in the 2017-2020 strategic plan.

Goal 5 - Gather and analyze data on rural issues to identify trends and needs. Goal

Goal 6 - Create transition and emergency plans for the board and the staff.

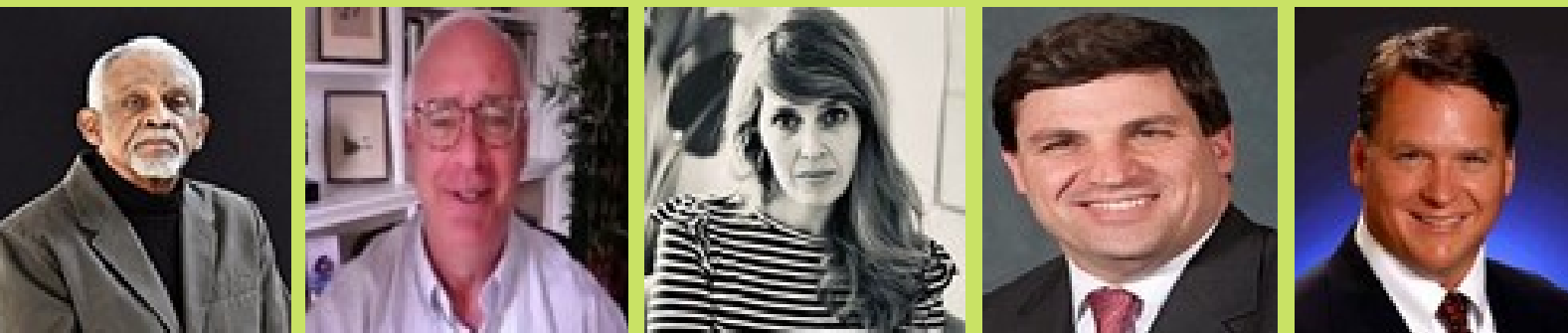


Attendees on zoom for Rural Maryland Day held on February 11, 2021.

Rural Impact Awards

The Maryland Rural Impact Awards is an opportunity to annually recognize individuals and organizations that have performed extraordinary acts of service to communities throughout rural Maryland and are subsidized into four categories

- **The Rural Community Development Award** was established to recognize a program, project or organization that substantially improves the quality of life in at least one rural community. Award criteria includes the following: dedication and creativity in providing community-oriented service; evidence of collaboration with relevant stakeholders to resolve social problems; and the use of partnerships or leveraged resources to realize community achievement goals. This year's recipient was **Mr. Dave Wheelan**
- **The Rural Volunteer Award** was established to recognize leadership, dedication, and noteworthy volunteer achievement beyond the call of one's professional duties to help improve their community. Award criteria includes the following: distinctive volunteer efforts; understanding of community needs; positive contributions impacting the economic, health, or wellbeing of their community; dedication to community; and overall leadership in community. This year's recipient was **Mr. Erroll Mattox Dave**
- **The Rural Economic Development Award** was established to recognize a program, project or organization that successfully attracts, retains or creates jobs in at least one rural county. Award criteria includes the following: significance of jobs attracted, retained or created in relation to a community's economic development objectives; noteworthy, creative, or innovative techniques brought to bear on challenging economic development situations; and the use of partnerships for leveraged resources in achieving business development goals. This year's recipient was **The Greater Cumberland Committee**
- **The Rural Champion Award** was established to recognize outstanding leadership and public service in promoting legislation and/or policy solutions to benefit rural communities. Award criteria includes the following: demonstrated wisdom and foresight in dealing with rural issues; exemplary leadership; ability to work with community members and organizations to understand rural Maryland priorities; commitment to working with public servants to address rural community needs; and overall dedication to serving constituents. This year's recipients were **Senator Douglas J.J. Peters and Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.**



Rural Impact Awardees from Left to Right: Erroll Mattox, Dave Wheelan, Jennifer Walsh for the Greater Cumberland Committee, Senator Douglas J.J. Peters, and Senator Stephen S. Hershey, Jr.

Advocating for Rural Communities

The Maryland General Assembly adjourned Sine Die on April 12, 2021 after final passage of the Fiscal Year 2022 Operating Budget and bills concerning police reform, tenant evictions, COVID relief, broadband, telehealth, and telework. The Rural Maryland Council (RMC) and their associated grant programs - the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) and the Maryland Agricultural Education and the Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) were fully funded and are designated to receive \$6,118,485 in Fiscal Year 2022. We thank Governor Larry Hogan, Senate President Bill Ferguson, and House Speaker Adrienne Jones for their support.

RMC Budget Priorities Achieved Under House Bill 588 and 589

- RMC will receive \$6 million in funding for the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF).
- The Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) will receive \$118,485.
- The five Regional Councils were funded at \$200,000 each.
- The Maryland Agricultural and Resource-Based Industry Development Corporation (MARBIDCO) will receive \$2.735 million in FY22.
- The Next Generation Farmland Acquisition Program received pre-authorization for \$2.5 million annually from FY23 through FY27.
- \$300 million of federal stimulus funding is allocated to expanding access to broadband, and \$75 million for workforce training and apprenticeships to enable the unemployed and underemployed to obtain jobs

Rural Legislative Highlights

- The inclusion of an extra \$200/student in the per pupil foundation amount for education technology (SB965/HB1372 Sponsors: Senate President Ferguson and House Speaker Jones).
- The expansion of telehealth and audio only medical services (SB3/HB123 Sponsors: Senator Melony Griffith, Delegate Joseline Pena-Melnyk).
- The expansion of tax credits for preceptors in areas with health care workforce shortages (SB102/HB1252 Sponsors: Senator Eckardt, Speaker Pro Tem Sample-Hughes).
- Establishment of the Maryland Behavioral Health and Public Safety Center of Excellence (SB857/HB1280 Sponsors: Senators Hester and Smith, Delegate Pena-Melnyk).
- Altered the noticed requirement for the sale of mobile home parks from 5 to 30 days (SB474/HB384 Sponsors: Senator Eckardt, Pro Tem Sample-Hughes).
- Established the Maryland Food System Resiliency to address food insecurity in the State (SB723/HB831 Sponsors: Senator Hester, Delegate Charkoudian).
- Established a State goal of preserving 1,030,000 acres of productive agricultural land by 2030 (SB692/HB860 Sponsors: Senator Young, Delegate Gilchrist).

Broadband Highlights

Broadband expansion was a major component of the 2021 legislative session and received \$300 million in funding, which included \$30 million for FY2021 rural broadband projects and \$15.2 million for FY2022 rural broadband projects. Major broadband legislation passed as well, including the codification of The Office of Statewide Broadband, previously the Office of Rural Broadband, while keeping the Rural Broadband Assistance Fund open for federal funding (SB66/HB97 Sponsors: Senator Elfreth, Delegate Lierman). Additionally, the establishment of joint trenching in Maryland, which will allow broadband wires to be installed along trenches underground (SB824/HB1328 Sponsors: Senator Hester, Delegate Feldmark). This new legislation and funding for broadband will make a major impact on efforts to close the digital divide and ensure that all Marylanders have access to highspeed internet.



Photo: From left to right Senate President Bill Ferguson, Governor Larry Hogan, and House Speaker Adrienne Jones signing SB66 on April 13, 2021

Rural Maryland Day

Rural Maryland Day was celebrated virtually this year on February 11, 2021. The event provided an opportunity for over 100 rural advocates to meet one-on-one with key legislators to discuss both the strengths and challenges experienced living in rural Maryland. Some of the key talking points for this year's Rural Maryland Day included, health care, broadband, infrastructure, economic development, the budget, and the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund. The event concluded with a video message from the Governor and the presentation of a digital proclamation. Additional recognitions included a Department of Agriculture Secretary's Citation and both Senate and House of Delegates resolutions recognizing the Council's 25th anniversary.

Maryland Day

Maryland Day is celebrated annually on March 25th, the anniversary of the day The Ark and The Dove landed at St. Clement's Island in 1634. Maryland Day has been celebrated since 1903, initially a day recognized by the state's Board of Education to learn about Maryland's history. In 1916, the Maryland General Assembly first recognized Maryland Day as a legal state holiday.

In recognition of Maryland farmers, watermen, and rural communities, the Rural Maryland Council hosted a Grab & Go lunch for Legislators on Maryland Day, Thursday, March 25, 2021, at Lawyer's Mall in Annapolis sponsored by the Maryland Broadband Cooperative, the Rural Maryland Foundation and the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission. The bag lunch was supplied by Caroline County's Chesapeake Culinary Center that included locally produced foods as well as a sample of Chesapeake Blue fishcakes.

The event concluded with statements by Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford, the Secretary of Maryland DNR Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, and RMC Chair John Hartline.



Photo Caption: Rural Maryland Council Chair John Hartline, with Lieutenant Governor Boyd Rutherford and Secretary of Maryland Department of Natural Resources Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio during Maryland Day, March 25, 2021, Photo Credit: Tom Nappi



Jeannie Haddaway-Riccio, Maryland Department of Natural Resources presenting Governor Larry Hogans video to attendees for Rural Maryland Day

Legislative Highlights

EVENTS HELD

Virtual Legislative Lunch, 1/29
Virtual Rural Maryland Day 2/11
In-person *Grab and Go* lunch for Maryland Day, 3/25

RURAL CAUCUS MEETINGS

The Rural Caucus met on February 11th and March 11th to discuss issues facing Maryland's Rural Communities and Residents

LEGISLATIVE MEETINGS

The Legislative Committee met this session to discuss bills, testimonies and other legislative matters throughout the session

POSITION STATEMENTS

Position statements submitted to the legislators in support of bills

BILLS MONITORED

Total bills monitored throughout the legislative session

Maryland Rural Caucus

The Rural Maryland Council assists the Rural Caucus with the planning and hosting of their meetings. The Caucus met twice during the 2021 legislative session. The first meeting occurred on February 11, 2021, during Rural Maryland Day. The guest speakers were Drew Van Dopp, President and CEO and Tyler Patton, Senior Vice President of Public Affairs with the Maryland Broadband Cooperative Inc. Also speaking was John Hartline, Executive Director of the Tri-County Council of Southern Maryland. The second meeting occurred on March 11, 2021, with guest speaker the Honorable Wilbur Leventgood Jr., President of the Maryland Association of Counties. The Caucus also submitted a letter to Governor Hogan in support of rural broadband funding.

Staying Connected

Due to the pandemic, many of our once in-person meetings were held virtually. During the FY21 time period, the Council was able to meet with many of our State's elected officials, as well as many other insightful guests.

The RMC Executive Board held its first virtual meeting on Thursday, July 9, 2020. Our featured guest speaker was Ms. Anne C. Hazlett, Senior Advisor for Rural Affairs, Office of National Drug Control Policy Executive Office of the President. During the meeting, Hazlett shared an overview of the rural addiction resources that are available to those struggling with addiction nationwide. Also, Mr. Kenrick Gordon, Director of the Governor's Office of Rural Broadband spoke to our attendees and shared a presentation on the Maryland Broadband Education Network and how it is affecting unserved students in the state. The meeting also featured updates on the RMC Board and Committee activities.

Our Winter Quarterly Executive Board meeting and Legislative Luncheon were held on Friday, January 29, 2021, via Zoom. The Honorable Ben Cardin, United States Senator was our featured guest speaker. The Senator shared with attendees how President Biden's Administration is working on addressing COVID-19 issues in underserved communities in rural Maryland including effective vaccine distribution, relief to families and small businesses, and safely reopening schools. RMC active committee reports and upcoming events for 2021 were also shared.

Our Spring Quarterly Executive Board meeting was held on Friday, April 9, 2021 on Zoom. The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, United States Senator was our featured guest speaker. The Senator shared an overview of the broadband resources available to students learning virtually or hybrid in rural areas. He also shared an update on the COVID-19 Farmer CARES Act and the American Jobs bill. Also during the meeting, RMC active committee reports and upcoming events were shared.



The RMC is proud to be a member of Partners for Rural America (PRA). PRA was founded in 1998 to support the efforts of its member State Rural Development Councils (SRDCs), which are uniquely positioned to expand economic and social opportunities for America's rural communities and their residents, promote equal treatment of rural America by government agencies and the private sector and provide a collective voice for rural America. The PRA Board of Directors typically meets monthly and hosts an annual in person meeting. Unfortunately, due to Covid, the Board was unable to meet in 2020.



Photo: Ms. Anne C. Hazlett, Senior Advisor for Rural Affairs, Office of National Control Drug Policy speaking to attendees at the virtual RMC Quarterly Executive Board meeting held on July 9, 2020.



Photo: Screenshot of The Honorable Chris Van Hollen, United States Senator speaking to attendees at the RMC Spring Quarterly Executive Board meeting on April, 9 2021, on zoom.



Photo: Screenshot of The Honorable Ben Cardin, United States Senator speaking to attendees at the Winter Quarterly Executive Board Meeting and Legislative Luncheon on

Maryland Agriculture Education Rural Development Assistance Fund

Overview

The Maryland Agriculture Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF) grant funding provides capacity-building funds to rural nonprofit service providers. The MAERDAF program is funded through the state of Maryland's Annual Operating Budget. In Fiscal Year 2021, the MAERDAF budget line item received \$158,650 (PCA 39101) in their line-item appropriations and \$487,704 from RMPIF (PCA 38101), totaling \$646,354. Due to the high demand the Grant Review Board approved an allocation of \$669,015 and \$158,316 for a total of \$827,331 in MAERDAF

Fiscal Year 2021 Grant Review Board

- **Mindie Burgoyne**, Senior Regional Business Development Representative, Commerce
- **Karen Fedor**, Senior Agricultural Marketing Specialist, Maryland Department of Agriculture
- **Dan Rider**, Forest Stewardship & Utilization Program Manager, Maryland Department of Natural Resource Forest Service
- **Sara Seitz**, Director, State Office of Rural Health
- **Dona Sorce**, Project Manager, Division of Neighborhood Revitalization, Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development
- **Helen Wernecke**, Rural Maryland Chair Designee



AmeriCorps Graduation:

Photo provided by Community Maryland Mediation

A total of 40 MAERDAF grants were awarded to rural-serving organizations, and 4 of these organizations declined the award due to reduced funding and COVID related impacts. Out of remaining 36 grantees, 13 of these organizations were either fully funded or partially funded through the MAERDAF funds appropriated through a separate line-item in the State's operating budget and the remaining 23 organizations were allocated funding from the RMPIF grant program. Grant award funds were distributed in two disbursements per request of the Department of Budget and Management due to the State budget freeze. The first disbursement contained 93.345% of the grant award and was distributed to grantees in the 2nd and 3rd quarters in 2021. The second disbursement contained 6.655% of the grant award and was to be distributed to grantees if funding was available in the 4th quarter. On March 16, 2021, the Council was approved to distribute the second disbursement to grantees. Thirteen of the organizations received their award funds from both MAERDAF (PCA 39101) and RMPIF (PCA 38101) budget line-items and the remaining 23 organizations were funded through the RMPIF (PCA 38101) budget line-item. RMC grant funded projects must be completed within the current fiscal year and begin August 1 and end June 30. The final report is due July 15.

The Council conducted two virtual information sessions to review program guidelines and criteria as well as offered a grant writing workshop. Grant information sessions were held on Tuesday, April 27, 2021, and Wednesday, May 5, 2021. The grant writing workshop was held on Friday, April 30, 2021, with Grant Writer Kathy Bosin and RMC staff. Additionally, RMC staff also met with individuals one on one to discuss grant proposals and offer technical assistance.

Agricultural and Forestry Education - MAERDAF

Chesapeake College Foundation - Amount Awarded - \$11,000

Project Name - Growing an Agriculture Education Resource Center for the Mid-Shore

The Chesapeake College Agriculture Program, the only community college program in the state, has sought stakeholder input through its Program Advisory Council and is looking toward growth in two specific areas to enhance instruction and enrollment. Instructionally, the program seeks to centralize and formalize an Agriculture Education Resource Center on campus. This Center will build on efforts, such as the high tunnel funded through a previous RMC grant, to teach agricultural skills in a practical, hands-on setting that simulates experiences in the field and that meets industry-identified need for the diversification of farm products in Maryland. The Agriculture Program's other key growth area is enrollment. Efforts will be made to create opportunities to use the Agriculture Education Resource Center as a recruitment tool.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was expended to pay for the replacement cover for the College's existing high-tunnel and contractual services to provide appropriate water and electric hook-ups. *An Extension was requested until January 2022 - due to challenges brought about by COVID restrictions, and weather.*

Frederick CTC FFA Alumni, Inc - Amount Awarded - \$4,250**Project Name - Agriculture for All**

Through virtual, small group and whole group training, *Agriculture for All* aims to provide training that is not readily available, but vitally important to advance agricultural educators knowledge and skills while facilitating an agricultural education program welcoming for all students to achieve career preparation success. Agriculture for All seeks to improve agricultural teachers' self-efficacy with utilizing new technology to facilitate online learning, integrating supervised agricultural experiences into current county agricultural curricula and increasing participation in youth leadership learning opportunities for 6th-12th grade students through Future Farmers of America. The three-circle agricultural teaching model is essential to teacher, program and student success and will be the driving force for all professional development offerings.

The MAERDAF grant provided 30 hours of professional development and engaged with eight teachers who have not attended in the past three years, provided training in areas specific to agriculture education and inclusion, diversity and equity, and provided eight Insta360 cameras to teachers across the state

LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$27,500**Project Name - Increasing the Capacity and Resiliency of Rural Leaders**

The LEAD Maryland Fellowship is a two-year leadership development program with the goal to increase the number and capacity of leaders serving agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. Working collaboratively, LEAD Maryland Foundation (LEAD), will provide a speaker's series, entitled "Speaker Series on Resilient Leadership" that will provide provide three prominent speakers who will address the traits of resilient leadership. Topics will include COVID's impact on agriculture, civil discourse, and organizational transformation through innovative leadership. Additionally, LEAD Maryland is seeking funding to support multi-day seminars to deliver curriculum to its current class. These seminars will be held at: Washington DC, Eastern Shore, and Baltimore City and County.

This grant funded two projects: 1) Curriculum Delivery to Fellows; Funds were used for travel, meals, lodging, and a deposit for two hotel/conference centers for multi day seminars in D.C and Baltimore City. 2) A Speaker Series (in collaboration with the Hughes Center), and workshops: Three speakers were provided, which 265 people attended, and three workshops were provided, with attendance of roughly 75 in each.

Maryland Agricultural Education Foundation- Amount Awarded - \$19,720**Project Name - Infusing Agriculture into the Middle School Classroom**

The Maryland Agriculture Education Foundation, Inc. (MAEF) promotes the understanding and importance of agriculture in our daily lives and is striving to address this situation by making teachers more literate in agriculture. MAEF offers vibrant programming for elementary and high school teachers (including an Elementary Ag in the Classroom teacher workshop and support of high school FFA) but lacks programming at the intermediate level. MAEF is seeking grant funding to help finalize the development and implementation of a new course, entitled "Infusing Agriculture into the Middle School Classroom", which will fill a critical programming void in the middle school curriculum. This innovative course will allow in-depth online study, chat room and an in-person workshop/farm experience to increase depth of knowledge by allowing teachers hands on activities and interactive farm tours.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to pay the salary and wages for MAEF's Director of Middle School and Natural Resources to plan, develop and teach the course, as well as the purchase of materials and supplies, and online teaching. This project resulted in the development of the new course in partnership with Goucher College and received approval for 3 MSDE CPDV credits for secondary (both Middle and High School) teachers. Eight teachers signed up for the new course. Unfortunately, due to COVID, only one session was able to be held because of the pandemic.

Maryland Forests Association, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$32,500**Project Name - Faces of Forestry**

Maryland Forest Association, Inc. (MFA) is a state-wide nonprofit organization whose mission is to conserve and enhance forests in the State. The goal of the Faces of Forestry campaign is to enhance public perception of the environmental and economic benefits of sustainable forestry management ranging in Maryland, focusing on water quality and open space retention to renewable energy development & rural job retention/expansion. The campaign will have diverse participation highlighting individuals from all walks of life that are part of the forest community.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to pay for the salary and wages for the MFA staff and consultant services, the marketing consultant, printing costs for the Faces of Forestry booklet, Edwin Remsberg photography, graphic design, MFA display updates, travel, and meeting expenses. An *extension was granted until January 2022*. As of the fall 2021, filming was underway.

Maryland Horse Foundation - Amount Awarded - \$15,000**Project Name - A Premier Educational/Promotional Program to Drive Economic Growth to Maryland's Equine Industry**

The Maryland Horse Industry Foundation (MHIF) serves various education and workforce development needs of the Maryland horse industry. MHIF plans to utilize grant award funds for two projects. First, initiate a new Maryland Horse Month that will celebrate major equestrian events with contests, viewing parties, live stream, and telecast of events. MHIF will create new marketing materials for Horse Land Festivals, including virtual farm tours, equine tourism trails and expansion of the MarylandHorse.com website. Second, move the "Horses For Courses" school curriculum to an online platform and promote usage incentives in order to increase awareness and ability for schools to participate in the Horse Discovery Network.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was expended to promote Maryland Horse Month and support educational activities related to MHIF. This grant led to the following: During Maryland Horse Month in October 2020, state tourism had 4,000 visitors to its new equestrian website and over 50,000 social media hits for its equine postings; traffic on the existing MarylandHorse.com website tripled from September to October; over 28,000 impressions on Maryland Horse Month Facebook page and followers grew to over 900 (from 0) in October; a total of 90 virtual and in-person equine events were held during the month of October; and, Maryland Horse Month Partners collectively reached 150,000 people through social media.

MPT Foundation, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$25,000**Project Name - Maryland Farm & Harvest Season 8**

Maryland Public Television's (MPT) programming includes the Maryland Farm & Harvest program- a half-hour public TV series developed to help people learn about and more deeply appreciate Maryland's number one industry, agriculture. The series accomplishes its educational and entertainment goals by telling the stories of the people who maintain the state's vast and diverse agriculture organizations. From digging into the science of soil health to exploring how COVID-19 has impacted farming operations, episodes show viewers the cutting-edge technology that powers modern agriculture and illustrate how the changing business environment presents new challenges to farmers every day. Viewers of Maryland Farm & Harvest learn about science, animal farming, horticulture, economics, history, cooking, and more.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to support Season Eight of the Maryland Farm and Harvest television series programming. Thirteen new episodes were produced, which viewers of Maryland Farm & Harvest had access to via multiple television broadcasts and free on-demand platforms. Cumulatively, the eighth season of Maryland Farm & Harvest reached approximately 1.33 million viewers between TV views (~250,000), online views (~407,550), and social media impressions (~671,500) between November 2020 and March 2021.

Sassafras Environmental Education Center - Amount Awarded - \$8,500**Project Name - Volunteer Maryland Partnership - Building SEEC's Volunteer Program Capacity**

The Sassafras Environmental Education Center's (SEEC) mission is to provide sequential, annual outdoor experiences leading to a population of future Eastern Shore citizens who will be capable of living compatibly with nature's design. With funding provided by MAERDAF, SEEC will hire a Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps Member to strengthen our Volunteer Program through recruiting and training volunteers to assist with the Center's community garden, educational programming, and composting program implementation.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, paid the salary and wages for a full-time Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps member. This member engaged more than 125 volunteers in agricultural activities which produced more than 500 lbs. of fresh produce which was distributed to the communities in Kent County free of charge.

Steam Onward Inc - Amount Awarded - \$11,750**Project Name - MORE THAN FARMING: 21st Century Technologies in Rural Maryland Agriculture and Natural Resources**

The mission of Steam Onward is to increase the number of minority and under-served youth pursuing higher education in STEM related fields such as science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Steam Onward plans to produce and distribute statewide, a series called "More Than Farming". This series will include short (5 minutes each) educational videos that illustrate examples of businesses in rural Maryland that utilize 21st century precision and digital technologies in agriculture, aquaculture and natural resources.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to pay for the videography, publications, materials and supplies, consultant services, and online social media boosting for the "More Than Farming" (MTF) educational series. As of June 2021, due to COVID delays, the first three episodes of MTF were set to be complete by late Fall of 2021. These episodes are expected to reach approximately 1000+ high school students in Environmental, Agricultural, and Natural Resources.

Western Maryland RC&D - Amount Awarded - \$38,950**Project Name - Developing Capacity for Hemp Crop Testing and Processing in Western Maryland**

The Mountain Maryland Hemp Alliance is seeking funding to build capacity for local testing and processing of industrial hemp grown in Western Maryland. Current federal regulations require farmers to test their crop within 14 days of harvest for total THC content, which cannot exceed 0.3%. This requires most farmers to test weekly from mid-August through September to monitor total THC levels. Currently, there are no testing facilities located in Western Maryland to test potency of hemp. The project would develop field and lab testing capacity and educational programs in Western Maryland through partnership with University of Maryland Extension and regional institutes of higher education. Additionally, the project is also seeking funding for post-harvest processing equipment. A mobile, mechanized device for stripping biomass would alleviate bottlenecks in the processing of regionally grown hemp and help farmers move their crop for extraction.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, paid for the post processing equipment, testing equipment, materials and supplies, and administrative funds for Western Maryland RC&D. As a result, eight farmers were able to utilize the processing equipment on their farms, 3 college students have been trained on the equipment, five farms used the hemp plucker to remove 2,245 lbs. of biomass from 1,175 plants, and more than 350 community members were educated on hemp through outreach events.

Western Maryland RC&D - Amount Awarded - \$11,170**Project Name - Hands-On Forestry Education in Western Maryland**

This project will produce tree and shrub seedlings at the Frostburg Grows nursery site which will be used to support hands-on forestry education in western Maryland via the Maryland Forest Service's Backyard Buffers Program and other partner programs. The Backyard Buffers Program encourages homeowners to create a streamside buffer of native trees and shrubs by providing a free "buffer in a bag". Streamside buffers create habitat for wildlife, reduce the number of pollutants that enter our waterways, and stabilize streambanks, protecting them from erosion. Additionally, WMRC&D will partner with Trout Unlimited by providing seedlings for use in their upcoming 2021 riparian buffer plantings. This project will further promote forestry education by making the Frostburg Grows nursery site available to local students and other citizens in the region, who will have the opportunity to engage in seedling production and care.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, paid for the salary and wage for the time the WMRC&D Executive Director works on the project, travel, project equipment, materials and supplies. Native tree seedlings for upwards of 350 homeowners in Western Maryland have been grown or purchased using project funds. Forestry educational materials for 400 homeowners in western Maryland were developed and printed. Seedlings will be distributed Spring of 2022. A new water pump and storage tank for Frostburg Grows nursery site was purchased, which was be utilized to deliver water for the seedlings that were grown for the project.

Community and Economic Development - MAERDAF

Allegany College of Maryland - Amount Awarded - \$20,750**Project Name - Enhancing Virtual Instruction/ Workforce Development at Allegany College of Maryland Through Smart Classroom Technology**

Allegany College of Maryland is a two-year public community college located in Cumberland, Maryland. Smart classroom technology is essential for the College to educate students through a flexibly online setting in response to the current pandemic. The project will create flexible learning opportunities for students at Allegany College of Maryland through the utilization of state-of-the-art technology. This project will be used to enhance the technological outfitting of four classrooms on the College campus that will be used for distance learning activities.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to add SMART classroom technology to two classrooms on campus and 4 classrooms total will become SMART classrooms. At least 300 students/individuals will use this technology over the next three years, at least 20 businesses will benefit from this project over the next three years, and at least 30 credit hours will be delivered virtually in the first academic year of implementation.

Community Mediation Maryland - Amount Awarded - \$50,000**Project Name - Community Mediation Corps - Rural Mediation Centers Only**

Community Mediation Maryland (CMM) advances collaborative conflict resolution in Maryland through educating the public, providing training and quality assurance, conducting research, and creatively applying mediation to social challenges. CMM is seeking funds to place seven (7) full-time AmeriCorps members in community mediation centers located in rural counties throughout Maryland. Each AmeriCorps member is trained as a mediator, receiving 172 hours of conflict resolution training. Members perform intake, mediate conflict, and participate in outreach events. AmeriCorps members have the opportunity to mediate in schools, correctional facilities, and help resolve conflicts within their community.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to pay the salary and wages for seven (7) full-time AmeriCorps members. Five (5) AmeriCorps members were secured through this grant, two (2) of the members were offered full-time positions. Five (5) AmeriCorps Members were placed in the following mediation centers: Harford County Community Mediation Program, Cecil County Community Mediation Center, Mediation First (Washington County), Tri Community Mediation (Somerset, Wicomico, Worcester Counties), and Mid Shore Mediation Center (Caroline, Dorchester, Talbot Counties). This program was unable to recruit AmeriCorps members for the Upper Shore Community Mediation Center or the Charles County Mediation Centers so they increased the hours of 1 part-time staff member in Charles County and 3 part-time staff members with Upper Shore Community Mediation.

Community Support Systems, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$7,934**Project Name - Engage - Volunteer Coordinator**

Community Support Systems, Inc. is a grassroots, community-based social service agency serving low to moderate income families, individuals, and senior citizens in the rural areas and outer suburbs of Prince George's County and northern Charles County. CSC operates three food pantries and they are seeking to engage a Volunteer Coordinator through the Volunteer Maryland program to coordinate over 90 volunteers to assist with the day-to-day operations of the food pantries. The Volunteer Coordinator will be responsible for recruiting new volunteers, provide training that meets the needs of our current and future volunteers and establish 'best practices' policies and procedures for our food pantry Volunteer Program.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to pay the salary and wages for a full-time Volunteer Maryland AmeriCorps member. The Volunteer Coordinator completed all the necessary documents and procedures in order to recruit new volunteers. Due to COVID, the Coordinator was unable to complete the full one-year term.

Garrett County Arts Council, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$19,604**Project Name - \$MART ART, Shared Workspace**

Garrett County Arts Council's (GCAC) mission is to aid, encourage, advise, and coordinate activities dedicated to the promotion of cultural arts in Garrett County, and to integrate such activities into the life of our community. GCAC's MAERDAF proposal creates \$MART ART, Shared Workspace: an ADA-accessible community workspace equipped with various digital/traditional tools/services assisting rural art entrepreneurs to flourish in the global digital-based economy. GCAC will provide key education/professional development services with the creation of additional employment opportunities for artists and professionals in a resource capacity.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was expended to pay for the workspace conversion and furniture, equipment and software, program documentation, and consultant services. This resulted in 1 hour, one-to-one instruction for 20 artists, 20 artists/entrepreneurs had their own e-commerce page created, 10 more participated in SEYMOUR "Holiday Edition, and 24 participants in an online series.

Habitat for Humanity Choptank, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$13,300**Project Name - AmeriCorps Construction Crew Leader and Community Education/Outreach Positions**

Habitat for Humanity Choptank is a nonprofit organization that focuses on building homes, communities and hope. Grant funding will help build the capacity to empower local families by leveraging funding to host an AmeriCorps member. The AmeriCorps member will provide financial literacy and education classes that will be expanded to allow low-income households to take advantage of curriculum, without any obligation to participate in the Habitat homeownership program.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to pay the salary and wages to host an AmeriCorps member. This AmeriCorps member completed an Online module for the financial literacy program and another online module is underway. To date, 4 households have attended education workshops 14 households participated in one-on-one financial counseling sessions during FY21, and another 10 households have met with a counselor in July 2021.

Habitat For Humanity Of Wicomico County, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$25,000**Project Name - Wicomico Habitat Builds Hope**

Habitat for Humanity of Wicomico County brings people together to build homes and communities in both Wicomico and Somerset Counties. This project entails building capacity by fully funding two Salisbury University ShoreCorps AmeriCorps members to serve in Community Building and Roof Repair programs, and partially funding their full-time Resource Coordinator-an important role that connects with donors that provide sponsorships and in-kind resources to fund projects.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to pay the salary and wages for the AmeriCorps Volunteer Coordinator and Roof and Repair Coordinator, and partial salary for their Resource Coordinator. This work led to 461 individuals from being evicted in FY2021. Restore was able to remain open to the public and sales reached \$547,851.

This extra income helped to serve 20 older adults in Somerset and Wicomico County with critical home repairs. The homeownership program served 7 individuals (2 families) and the high school summer workforce development program expanded to include both certificate and diploma students. Lastly, the goal to serve reentry citizens with workforce development was reached with 24 individuals trained and zero individuals reentering the criminal justice system.

Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna - Amount Awarded - \$25,000**Project Name - Critical Home Repairs for Rural Low-income Families and Seniors**

Driven by the vision that everyone needs an affordable and decent place to live, Habitat for Humanity Susquehanna leverages their home building experience to provide critical home repairs for rural low-income homeowners in Harford and Cecil Counties, allowing them to live safely and remain in their homes. The families, individuals, seniors, and veterans live in unsafe, substandard homes in disrepair and can't afford the materials and labor to fix them. They are at risk for homelessness if forced to leave homes that are irreparable. The Critical Home Repairs for Rural Low-income Families and Seniors project will provide critical repairs to homes that include but are not limited to roofs, ADA accessible bathrooms and ramps, heating units, plumbing and electrical repairs, water heaters, and other crucial repairs that alleviate health and safety issues.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to pay for the materials and contractors required by each home's project. As of June 30th, eight (8) home repairs were completed for rural low-income homeowners in Harford and Cecil Counties, seven of which were seniors. Repairs were made to three ADA modified bathrooms, grab bars, an access ramp, and a stair lift for the senior homeowner in a wheelchair. Also, a broken refrigerator was replaced for an elderly veteran, an energy audit was performed, and a gas leak was fixed. A family's drywall was repaired after fixing a plumbing leak. MAERDAF funding was used for repairs ranging from \$100 - \$7,305 per home.

Historic St. Mary's City Foundation - Amount Awarded - \$21,200**Project Name - Virtual Platform - A Year of Discovery at Historic St. Mary's City**

Historic St. Mary's City Foundation's (HSMCF) mission is to preserve and protect the archaeological and historical record of Maryland's first capital and to appropriately develop the historic and scenic site for education, enjoyment, and general benefit of the public. Their living history museum is visited by tens of thousands of individuals annually. Due to COVID-19 many of their core demographics have been unable to visit in person. In order to recapture this audience, HSMCF has devoted significant resources to expanding their virtual platform. The virtual content platform being pursued will give their institution the opportunity to reach their largest demographic (elementary age school children) that cannot attend in person due to COVID-19 restrictions and will provide content for an expanded audience for years to come.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was expended to successfully launch the virtual platform equipment, pay for material costs, consultant services, and promotional costs. To date, 1,500 Individuals have been trained, served or reached, 5,000 instructional hours were delivered, 25 research items and/or tools were created, and 100 services were delivered.

Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's - Amount Awarded - \$13,000**Project Name - Academic Support & Enrichment for Underserved Students in Kent & Queen Anne's Counties**

Horizons of Kent and Queen Anne's works towards closing the opportunity gap for children with limited economic means in Kent and Queen Anne's Counties. They work with students in grades PreK-8th during the summer months to eliminate the summer slide in learning and to realize their potential through a results-oriented program of academic achievement, cultural enrichment, and personal mentoring. Horizon's plans to expand their program to offer additional support to their students during the school year. This support entails the hiring of teachers and assistants to work with students during Saturday sessions through a virtual platform. Meetings will focus on leadership skills, academic support, and hands-on STEM lessons. The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to cover the salary and wages of the

teachers and college assistants. Four of the nine eligible students participated in the High School Leadership program. Of the 100 students eligible to participate in the program, 40 students enrolled in the new School Year Program. Of the 14 students that participated in the Zoom lessons and the Prodigy app, 86% achieved their math goals as measured by the Prodigy placement tests.

Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area, Inc. dba Beach to Bay Heritage Area - Amount Awarded - \$35,000

Project Name - Beach to Bay Heritage Area, Phase III: Shared Content Generation & Marketing in a COVID Environment

The Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Area Council's (LESHC) mission is to preserve, protect, and promote the historical, cultural and natural heritage of Maryland's Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester Counties. With the crisis of Covid-19 pandemic, LESHC plans to develop heritage site content through video "virtual tours" and written content creation for use in newsletter, website and social media as well as a broad marketing campaign to include outreach to both in-region residents and out-of-region visitors.

The MAERDAF grant, along with matching funds, was expended to pay for the consultant, video production, marketing, and web services. As of June 30th, the YouTube video has received approximately 1,700 views. Rack cards have been distributed to all visitor centers/tourism offices in the heritage area and the Annual Report is ready to be distributed at the annual luncheon on October 28th.

Lower Shore Land Trust - Amount Awarded - \$11,397

Project Name - F/T AmeriCorps Conservation Education & Community Outreach Coordinator

Lower Shore Land Trust (LSLT) is the regional land trust in the lower Eastern Shore, which includes Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. LSLT offers various tools to their community that include but are not limited to land protection, habitat restoration, and outdoor recreation. LSLT will host an AmeriCorps position for a second year. This person will serve as the Conservation Outreach and Education Coordinator supporting the Land Trust's mission and activities.

MAERDAF Funds were expended, in conjunction with matching funds, to provide the salary and wages for an AmeriCorps position. As of June 30, 2021, the project provided critical funding to extend the AmeriCorps position for a second year, during the pandemic, allowing LSLT to benefit from the program and providing ongoing training and experiences to the AmeriCorps member during challenging times. 551 individuals trained, served or reached, 7 instructional hours delivered, and 13 services delivered.

Maryland Food Bank - Eastern Shore - Amount Awarded - \$10,000

Project Name - Farm to Food Bank Program

The Maryland Food Bank's (MFB) Farm to Food Bank Program engages a network of more than 50 farms and orchards across the state in a partnership to provide hungry Marylanders with farm-fresh local produce. Through a combination of field gleanings, donations, and contract growing, these farms help the Maryland Food Bank (MFB) supply fresh, nutritious fruits and vegetables to food-insecure communities statewide. MFB trucks transport produce to distribution sites across the state where it is then given to individuals and families in need through MFB's Network Partner sites (e.g. soup kitchens, schools, pantries, shelters, etc.) and mobile pantry distribution events.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, paid for materials necessary for the gleaning process. As of June 30, 2021, grew with 20 farms, receiving 2.63 million pounds of produce from these farms during the grant period. The Maryland Food Bank has distributed this produce through their partners and with their Pantry on the Go events in underserved communities – including rural communities.

Maryland Rural Development Corporation - Amount Awarded - \$40,000

Project Name - Adult Education Access

Maryland Rural Development Corporation (MRDC) provides services in response to the needs of rural, low-income households and communities in Caroline, Cecil, and Kent Counties. For the past four years, MRDC has been operating wraparound services for adult education classes run by the local community colleges and held in two of their Head Start locations: Elkton, Cecil County and Greensboro, and Caroline County. MRDC provides transportation, meals, and childcare for the students and their children in a safe and welcoming venue using federal Community Services Block Grant program money and FY20 funding from RMC. This year, MRDC expanded the program and its additional services into their Edgewood Head Start Center in Harford County.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for the salary and wages for the Edgewood Head Start Center teachers. Certain objectives were postponed because of COVID not allowing in person activities, therefore MRDC launched a virtual program for Harford County and expanded it to include the students that would have been in Aberdeen.

Ocean City Development Corporation - Amount Awarded - \$31,900**Project Name - Craft Beer & Tourism Research, Marketing and App updates in a COVID world.**

The mission of Ocean City Development Corporation is to create and foster a safe and attractive environment in which innovative public and private sector partnerships will collaborate to maximize available resources and opportunities and eliminate barriers to revitalization in downtown Ocean City. Building off of the successful 2020 Shore Craft Beer app, the OCDC requests funds for research and marketing to further support the app with the goal to make the Shore a top craft beer destination. The project will produce data in a report, including GIS maps, to be distributed to all stakeholders.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, will be used to pay for the software programming and research component of the project. *Grantees granted an extension until January 2022.* To date, OCDC Created the initial survey and received over 400 responses. They intend to segment the list, produce additional surveys, and continue to accumulate data throughout the study period and strive for the 2,500 total respondents.

Preservation Maryland - Amount Awarded - \$22,000**Project Name - The Rural Maryland Heritage Outreach Initiative**

Preservation Maryland recognizes that one of the hardest hit segments of Maryland's economy during the COVID-19 pandemic has been the tourism-related organizations, entities, and sites. The Rural Maryland Heritage Outreach Initiative's goal is to highlight these special places through video in order to broaden their reach and increase visitation post pandemic. Preservation Maryland will invest in several mobile traveling video kits that will be freely provided to rural museums, nonprofits, main street organizations and tourism supporting entities throughout the State. A part-time video editor will work with these organizations to help make these short films and provide simple lessons how to use the equipment and market the materials.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, paid for the part-time video editor, video production equipment and travel to distribute the kits. To date, have created evergreen educational content that can be re-used, replicated, and built upon in the years to come. Developed 3 high quality video kits for users to sign out. A one time purchase of accompanying editing software, full purchase for each individual kit, videography technology. 4 online Evergreen Video Workshops were held, and development of a written instruction manual and online educational material

SHORE UP! Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$25,000**Project Name - SHORE UP! Inc. Meal Truck**

SHORE UP! Inc. is a private, non-profit Community Action Partnership on Maryland's Eastern Shore dedicated to revitalizing communities and empowering individuals and families to maintain long-term independence and achieve economic security through a comprehensive system of services and resources. The meal truck is a major investment and a significant community economic development project because it will be used to deliver foods to economically disadvantaged children and families in the agency's Head Start and Early Head Start programs. The truck will also be utilized to serve adults in the agency's Adult Day Services program, delivering meals to elderly or disabled individuals who are unable to purchase or prepare their own meals at home.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, will be used towards the purchase of a food truck to deliver meals. *Extension to January 2022*

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland - Amount Awarded - \$30,000**Project Name - Southern Maryland Community and Instructional Kitchen**

The Southern Maryland Commercial and Instructional Kitchen is a vital component of the Regional Agricultural Center (RAC) being constructed as a partnership between the Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission (SMADC) and St. Mary's County. Food safety instruction, basic cooking skills, a meat-cutting apprenticeship program, and a "home" to create Health Department approved cottage industry food products are all part of the mission of the Commercial and Instructional Kitchen.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to purchase audio/visual equipment, along with light kitchen equipment and tools to support a robust Instructional and Commercial Kitchen that would serve the population of Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's, Prince George's and Anne Arundel counties in Southern Maryland. As of June 30 2021, The equipment for the Instructional Kitchen for the Regional Agricultural Center (RAC) was purchased, delivered in a timely manner, and is being held in a secure location awaiting the completion of the RAC building.

Vehicles for Change, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$50,000**Project Name - Vehicles for Change- Lower Eastern Shore Division**

Vehicles for Change (VFC) provides the tools necessary to achieve financial stability for families through their car donation program and workforce development training for formerly incarcerated individuals. Vehicles for Change has plans to bring their successful automotive repair job training program to Salisbury, Maryland. This program will help individuals who would have difficulty in obtaining job training learn how to repair cars and trucks, with many of the training vehicles donated from the community and partnering with businesses in the community for placement of trainees.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, will be used towards the the salaries and wages for those staff operating the automotive repair job training program. *Extension to July 2022*

Western Maryland RC&D - Amount Awarded - \$50,000**Project Name - Maryland Forest Industry StoryMap**

The Western Maryland Resource Conservation and Development Council's mission is to build and sustain resource conservation programs which raise the quality of social, economic, and environmental development in the region. Building on the state-wide forest resources GIS platform that WMRC&D commissioned using U.S. Economic Development Administration funding, the Council will partner with the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC) and the Maryland Forest Service to develop a StoryMap that communicates the current status of the forestry industry in Maryland, while providing a narrative to assist the economic development community in understanding forest industry impacts.

The MAERDAF Grant award, along with matching funds, were used to pay for ESRGC consulting services to develop the StoryMap and WMRC&D administrative costs. The StoryMap was completed in June 2020. The Story Map will be linked on WMRC&D's website and partner websites in order to engage with economic development community and provide education on opportunities within the forest products industry.

Health Care - MAERDAF

Bay Community Support Services, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$25,706**Project Name - Construction & Renovation of Group Homes for the Disabled in 2 Rural Counties**

Bay Community Support Services (Bay-CSS) provides personalized services to adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities living in Southern and Central Maryland. Bay-CSS will utilize grant award funds to aid in the home repairs of 4 residential group homes located in two rural counties, Charles and St. Mary's. These houses are full-time homes to 17 individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities and a work location for 64 employees. One of the homes is a full-care residential home, meaning every resident is wheelchair-bound and has numerous preexisting health concerns.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were used to complete repairs of residential group homes. Repairs to be completed include a total roof replacement, window replacement of two homes (19 windows and 9 windows), replacement of a leaking exterior door, and several preventative maintenance issues to inhibit water intrusion, structural damage due to the elements, and invasive and expensive future issues. Bay-CSS completed numerous projects related to the remediation, reconstruction, and repairs of group homes located in two counties. These include mold remediation in a bathroom with an undetected water leak, reconstruction of building materials, and transition from non-ADA to ADA compliant bathrooms.

Channel Marker, Inc - Amount Awarded - \$19,895**Project Name - Channel Marker - Residential Homes - HVAC**

Channel Marker provides and coordinates mental and physical health support services to individuals challenged by severe and persistent mental illness and provides residential homes to clients with more severe mental illness in Caroline, Dorchester, and Talbot Counties. Grant award funds were requested to replace inefficient and worn HVAC units in the Dorchester residential homes and to repair damaged duct-work at the Caroline Day Program. Channel Marker reduces homelessness, law enforcement interactions, inappropriate use of health resources and emergency departments, and helps prevent potential crisis and inpatient admissions. In supporting the renovations, the requested grant will provide more cost efficient heating and cooling in the Channel Marker living spaces that will allow Channel Marker to continue the supports that allow clients to manage their illness and live independently in our communities.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, were expended to replace an HVAC system in a residential home and replace damaged duct work in a day program facility. New energy efficient HVAC systems and new duct work have been purchased, installed and are now operating.

For All Seasons, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$50,000**Project Name - COVID-19 Emergency Mental Health Appointments**

For All Seasons, Inc. provides outpatient mental health, psychiatric, education, and rape crisis services to English and Spanish speaking communities regardless of one's ability to pay. Trauma-certified therapists and psychiatrists provide a variety of treatment approaches and individualized care for children, adolescents, adults, and seniors on Maryland's Eastern Shore. For All Seasons, Inc.'s developed a new program to address the increase of new requests for emergency services after the onset of Covid-19. The COVID-19 Emergency Mental Health Appointments program include brief counseling, mental health assessments and intake appointments for people that require ongoing mental health treatment. The Covid-19 appointments are held each day at several of our locations in order to be able to rapidly respond to the mental health needs of Mid-Shore citizens who never had need for mental health care before Covid-19.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, was used to cover the costs of services for people who need Emergency Covid-19 appointments, but are uninsured or underinsured, and cannot otherwise pay. The Project provided a total of 373 services (Covid-19 emergency mental health appointments) to 127 unduplicated individuals in six of our satellite offices during the grant period.

Jesse Klump Memorial Fund, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$6,200**Project Name - Save a Shore Farmer**

Save a Shore Farmer is a campaign with the mission to prevent farmer suicides. It is focused predominantly (though not exclusively) on the lower Maryland Eastern Shore. The campaign serves an educational, not a therapeutic, role in order to break down the stigma that prevents rural residents from seeking mental health care, increasing awareness of the dire effects of depression, stress and anxiety, teaching to recognize warning sign, and leading those who need help to the resources that are available. The campaign does this using public communication tools like billboards, a website and social media, appearing at agriculture-related events, and in year three by manning mental health resource tables at public libraries and teaching nationally acclaimed classes for both farm families and those who professionally serve farms.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, paid for the rental of a billboard to market the campaign. The billboards were in place for the required four months in two locations. Traffic to the website during the period the billboards were in place increased by 288% vs. the grant year 2019-2020. The farmer suicide prevention materials were made available on 42 separate events, attracting an estimated 1,000 people to the table. Also presented in the monthly Zoom gatherings of the Maryland Governor's Commission on Suicide Prevention, a presentation viewed by 45 mental health professionals.

National Ski Patrol - Eastern Division, Wisp Ski Patrol - Amount Awarded - \$9,500**Project Name - Wisp Ski Patrol**

Wisp's Ski Patrol's (WSP) mission is to provide the highest level of emergency medical care to the outdoor recreation and surrounding community and transport patients to the next level of emergency medical care. WSP is a critical component of the Garrett County Emergency Medical Services and provides its services to the Wisp Ski Resort and County through the year. The WSP depend on updated training materials and testing equipment to teach renewal and community CPR classes, and in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, provide necessary and appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for its members, which currently consists of 86 patrollers.

The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, will be used to update training equipment and personal protective equipment. *An extension was granted until January 2022.* As of January 2021, Protective equipment has been purchased for members, CPR training equipment has been purchased and listed on Line D and are awaiting delivery, CPR courses were taught to the EMS community, however, the continuation of the pandemic has made it difficult to teach CPR in person. Leadership discussions to purchase additional PPE was also continuing.

Grantee Declined Awards

- Community Foundation of Howard County - \$20,000
Project Name - Grow It Forward
- Crisfield Arts & Entertainment District - \$8,500
Project Name - AmeriCorps Member for Crisfield Arts & Entertainment District and Crisfield Heritage Foundation
- Philips Wharf Environmental Center - \$5,000
Project Name - Philips Wharf Environmental Center Education Program Development -
- Southern Maryland Minority Chamber of Commerce Foundation, Inc - Amount Awarded - \$7,750
Project Name - Senior Digital Literacy Pilot Program

Available funds were redistributed to the following organizations mid year:

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center \$25,000 - The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center will be establishing the Chesapeake Agriculture Innovation Center on Maryland's Eastern Shore with the long-term goal of creating a national resource for the development of innovation and new technologies in Agribusiness, which include "Agritech, Aquatech, and Foodtech". This project will focus on the Center providing technical assistance to a diverse range of value-added entrepreneurs that incorporate innovation or technology in the production of their product. Workshops and programs currently planned, include but are not limited to, the following: Starting as a Craft Alcohol Producer; Regulations 101, Licenses and Penruts; Efficiency is Innovations - How to Increase Margins; How to Assess Product Mix for Better Merchandizing, Marketing, and Increased Profitability; Tips for Winning Over Retail Buyers, Market Readiness, and Social Media Marketing; and Funding Sources for Value-Added Producers. The RMPIF grant award, along with matching funds, will be expended to provide 12 workshops to businesses in the Foodtech industry.

MPT- Awarded \$40,000 - Maryland Public Television's (MPT) programming includes the Maryland Farm & Harvest program- a half-hour public TV series developed to help people learn about and more deeply appreciate Maryland's number one industry, agriculture. The series accomplishes its educational and entertainment goals by telling the stories of the people who maintain the state's vast and diverse agriculture organizations. From digging into the science of soil health to exploring how COVID-19 has impacted farming operations, episodes show viewers the cutting-edge technology that powers modern agriculture and illustrate how the changing business environment presents new challenges to farmers every day. Viewers of Maryland Farm & Harvest learn about science, animal farming, horticulture, economics, history, cooking, and more. Funding from the Rural Maryland Council will help Maryland Farm & Harvest continue to provide Marylanders with inspirational stories and useful information about the state's most important industry. The MAERDAF award, along with matching funds, will be used to support Season Nine of the Maryland Farm and Harvest television series programming.

Maces Lane Community Center- Amount Awarded: \$19,000 - Once complete, the renovation of the Maces Lane High School located in Cambridge, Maryland will provide a safe environment for area youth and also house a heritage museum. As a former segregated high school, the proposed Maces Lane Community Center will maintain community awareness of the school's history, hold events, and serve as a stop on the Harriet Tubman Trail. Scott Grove with iondesign consultant service is in the process of developing and organizing the design and displays of the High School's memorabilia for the museum. We are also partnering with The Boys and Girls Club to provide programs at the Center.

The Grantee will expend funds to: Provide for a consultant, a design estimator will be used to monitor and keep the construction of the project within the budget. This will include but not be limited to walk through of the building looking at every item to give us projected cost for the project as we move forward. Scott Grove with Forella Company at www.ForellaGroup.com in Chantilly, Virginia will provide this service. Provide for the costs to repair and restore historical items for display in the Community Center. Professional services will be provided by Downtown Frame of Mine, 319 High Street Cambridge, Maryland. This will include repair and restoration of twenty-one pictures. This includes Pictures of administrators, teachers, students, sports events and school facilities. Frames will be repaired and replaced when needed to complete the display. We continue to recruit and locate items for the center.

Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund

Overview

The goal of the Rural Maryland Prosperity Investment Fund (RMPIF) is to help raise the overall standard of living in rural areas to a level that meets or exceeds statewide benchmark averages by 2030, while preserving the best aspects of a pastoral heritage and rural way of life. Resources provided to the Fund are designed to facilitate significant targeted investments in important economic and community development programs and promote regional and intergovernmental cooperation. These investments will also enable local and regional public and nonprofit organizations to leverage additional non-state financial and human resources to facilitate the realization of sustainable rural development objectives.

RMPIF supports the Rural Maryland Council's activities and another grant program, the Maryland Agricultural Education and Rural Development Assistance Fund (MAERDAF). RMPIF provides capacity building funds to rural nonprofit service providers and community colleges and supports the state's five Regional Councils - regional planning and development agencies located across the State.

RMPIF has three focus areas:

1. Entrepreneurship

2. Health Care

3. Infrastructure

Due to COVID-19 and with guidance from the Department of Budget and Management, the Rural Maryland Council allocated grant funds in two disbursements in FY21. The first disbursement (Disbursement #1), containing 93% of the grant award, was released in October/November 2020 and the second disbursement (Disbursement #2), containing the remaining 7% of the award, was released in April 2021.



2021 Save a Shore Farmer Billboard by the Jesse Klump Memorial Fund, Inc.



LEAD Maryland. Photo by Edwin Remsberg

Health Care - RMPIF

Allegany County Human Resources Dev Commission - Amount Awarded - \$37,049

Project Name - Mobility Management Program

The Allegany County Human Resources Development Commission, Inc. (HRDC) is a Community Action Agency and Area Agency on Aging. Their mission is to eliminate social and economic barriers to promote individual and community stability through services, advocacy and collaboration. The Mobility Management program operating under Allegany County HRDC Aging Department focuses on filling the transportation gap for Allegany County. The Mobility Management program improves the quality of life for seniors, low-income and disabled individuals in the community by providing wheelchair, van and cab transports to and from the hospital, mental and physical health agencies from Monday through Sunday, 7AM to 10PM. Mobility Management also collaborates with several health care agencies in the county to ensure all at risk clients are being served.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, was expended to support the salary, wages, and benefits of the Mobility Manager to dispatch rides; travel costs and vehicle maintenance; program supplies and technology; and staff training. The Mobility Management Program provided non-medical emergency transportation to 13,327 individuals of the community to preventative, health, and human services appointments in FY21, 419 of these individuals were new clients

Asian American Center of Frederick - Amount Awarded - \$50,000

Project Name - WMD IMS - Western Maryland Integrated Mobile Services

The Asian American Center of Frederick is a clearinghouse of programs, opportunities, and advocacy for their region's immigrant and ethnic minority communities. The Western Maryland Integrated Mobile Services (WMD IMS) Project is a continuation of Center's FY2020 Project: Achieving Collaboration for Health Equity. This year's FY2021 Project will include collaborating with the Lions Club to cover 5 counties with screenings and telehealth, through continued development of their Community Health Workers program. An estimated 1,000 at risk residents will have access to health screening, medical follow-up, referral, and services coordination.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, was expended to support the salaries and wages of AACF staff and Community Health Workers; marketing materials for the program; travel expenses to cover the service area; training; outreach, education, and administrative related expenses. Some notable outcomes are, Food Assistance - monthly and periodic distribution and delivery of food to about 300 households of about 1,200 persons each month - food for at least 144,000 persons. Helped 900+ to be recertified for insurance coverage. Canvassed for vaccine education to at least 250 individuals. Provided 103 services for Assistance for Citizenship Integrated Services. 15 individuals served through English as a Second Language. Helped to call 400+ shut in seniors who later were connected with their vaccination team and received vaccines at their homes. Provided an average of 75 families with diapers for all sizes for at least a year. Baby showers conducted for African American/Black women of childbearing age increased by 14. Baby showers conducted for Hispanic/Latino women of childbearing age increased by 29. Unduplicated racial/ethnic minority women of childbearing age who attend baby showers (unduplicated) increased by 38. Pregnant women enrolled in face-to-face intervention program increased by 39. Completed face-to-face contacts with enrolled women increased by 254 using WhatsApp and text. Referrals to support services for women of childbearing age increased by 141. And lastly, completed referrals after follow-up increased by 150.

Brook Lane Health Services - Amount Awarded - \$150,000**Project Name - Water Source & Distribution Project**

Brook Lane Health Services (BLHS) mission is to help individuals improve their emotional and behavioral well-being through education and treatment. Brook Lane is the only hospital in the state of Maryland that relies on wells for its water source and they recently experienced a decrease in water production from the three wells on our campus. A new well was drilled and this project includes connecting that well to the existing distribution system on our campus, replacing aging pipes, and replacing and upgrading the water storage tank, pump and filtration systems. Without an adequate water supply, it would be very difficult for BLHS to continue to provide the critical mental health services needed by the thousands of Maryland residents who visit their campus each year.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the purchase of equipment needed to complete the project, including a new water tank and instrumentation. The new well is connected to a new distribution system; aging pipes have been replaced; and the water storage tank, pump and filtration systems have been replaced and upgraded. Brook Lane now has 15-20 Thousand gallons of water in reserve, which is enough for two days.

CalvertHealth Foundation - Amount Awarded - \$40,000**Project Name - Ask The Expert - Calvert County Community Health Outreach Program**

Calvert Health Medical Center's (CHMC) mission is to provide Southern Maryland residents with safe, high quality health care and promote wellness for a healthy community. The proposed project will mobilize Calvert Health Medical Center's 'Ask the Expert' program by bringing an expanded team of health professionals aboard the Calvert Health Mobile Health Unit into the community and to the community centers. These health professionals will take locally identified health care needs not only to the senior centers, but to other areas of greatest need where their most vulnerable populations can be reached. Building upon the existing successful 'Ask the Nurse' program, expansion of the 'Ask the Expert' program will assist CHMC with implementation strategies to address findings in the 2017 Calvert County Community Health Needs Assessment through (1) the provision of locally identified healthcare and wellness needs and (2) increased access to vulnerable and under-served populations.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the staff salaries and wages; travel costs; contracted pharmacists and interpretive services; and administrative costs related to the project. The Mobile Health Unit exceeded the originally projected 2 visits per month to provide free medical clinics and flu clinics to vulnerable populations and has completed 70 visits since September. The Ask the Expert program has provided health interventions to 2,505 residents since September. Due to community partners shutting down, the Ask the Expert program would shift to offer virtual programs such as town hall events and virtual videos from experts and added oral health screenings and drive thru clinics to replace events that were cancelled because of COVID.

Charles Regional Medical Center Foundation - Amount Awarded - \$40,420**Project Name - University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center Tele-Pharmacy Program**

University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center Foundation's (UM CRMC) mission is to enhance the Medical Center's financial resources, while building awareness, so it may provide excellent health care services to all members of the community. The UM CRMC Tele-Pharmacy program is a pilot project that will deliver 24/7 medication management services to an estimated 300 patients that live in Charles, St. Mary's, Calvert, and Prince George's Counties. Via tele-medicine, the project will expand UM CRMC's capacity to provide medication counseling for high-risk patients at hospital discharge; access to a pharmacist during off-peak hours, weekends and evenings; and post-discharge follow-up medication consultations. Eligible patients are those that 1) have been admitted to UM CRMC for emergency or in-patient care, and 2) have a new or existing diagnosis of pneumonia, congestive heart failure, diabetes, hypertension, COPD, sickle-cell anemia, or a behavioral health condition.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were expended to purchase tablet computers, language software, video cameras, medication management software, remote pharmacist support (for off-peak hours), pharmacist training, and marketing. Results were achieved, with the exception of an increase in Chronic Obstruction Pulmonary Disease (COPD) readmissions. There was a decrease in readmissions rates for the top 5 readmissions at University of Maryland Charles Regional Medical Center through discharge counseling. Compared to 6 months' prior readmissions rates, there was a decrease in the following diseases: MI 11%, CHF 8%, Pneumonia 3%, and Diabetes 4%. This was an average of a 6% decrease in the disease states selected. Hospital staff was able to learn the process that Comprehensive Pharmacy Services used to identify, and techniques used to discharge counsel these patients. The results that were not achieved was the increase in readmissions from COPD, which the ongoing Pandemic may have contributed to the increase in admissions.

Delmarva Community Services - Amount Awarded - \$107,000**Project Name - Intergenerational Health through Intergenerational Activities**

Delmarva Community Services, Inc. (DCS) is a multi-service, non-profit agency whose mission it is to help people who wish to maintain dignity and an independent lifestyle within their rural community on the Delmarva Peninsula. The project seeks funding for exercise equipment & bocce court construction at the Weinberg Intergenerational Center on Maryland's Eastern Shore in order to improve health outcomes for seniors, children, individuals with disabilities, and those in poverty by providing indoor/outdoor options for exercise & social interaction.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were utilized to purchase the project fencing, benches, and playground equipment. As of June 2021, weather delays and pandemic-related supply chain disruptions have postponed the completion date. The purchase and installation of the playground and adult fitness stations was completed, but the necessity of having access to the entire building meant the playground could not be built until the entire structure was nearly finished. The HJWIC is nearing completion, and the playground and adult fitness stations will soon be open for use. Staff have also given multiple tours to funders, stakeholders, and community partners to demonstrate the equipment and tell them of the programs to take place.

Family & Children's Services of Central Maryland Amount Awarded - \$150,000**Project Name - Family Support Center at West End Place**

The Family Support Center's (FSC) mission is to transform the lives of children and adults by providing opportunities to build self confidence, resilience and hope. The Center plans to expand its services by building the FSC at West End Place, which will provide a comprehensive array of services for the entire family and include mental health counseling, psychiatry and medication management services to the rural communities of Carroll and Harford Counties. It will also be the home of the counties only medical adult day care for seniors and the central location for a full range of family and domestic violence services including counseling, case management, court advocacy, 24 hour hotline, and a family violence shelter. The project entails purchasing the West End Place property from the Mayor and Common Council of Westminster that currently houses the medical adult day care and 8 affordable senior housing units and add an 10,000 sq. ft. addition to house a new shelter for victims of domestic violence, elder abuse and sex trafficking, the 24-hour domestic violence hotline operations, comprehensive case management, behavioral health and psychiatric services.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were utilized to support the renovation and construction costs of the Family Support Center at West End Place. The project closed on all financing on December 15, 2020. Contractors conducted preconstruction activities through January 2021 and construction began in February. On May 18, 2021, the ceremonial groundbreaking event was held in person on the construction site to approximately 50 local officials, dignitaries and funders. The project continues to move forward on schedule and budget and is projected to be complete December 9, 2021.

For All Seasons, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$80,000**Project Name - Psychiatry**

For All Seasons provides outpatient mental health, psychiatric, education, and rape crisis services to English and Spanish speaking communities regardless of one's ability to pay. For All Seasons' psychiatry program is one of its most important offerings to the men, women, children and families of the five counties of the Mid-Shore (Kent, Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot and Dorchester.) Their team consists of a Medical Director, a psychiatrist specializing in children and adolescents, and two psychiatric nurse practitioners. This team is hired on a contractual basis, and while their time seeing patients is covered through third party reimbursements, their non-billable time is not. This project funds the non-billable time of the psychiatry team (coordinating treatment with treatment teams, leading treatment team meetings, consultation with and supervision of staff, and strategic planning including planning operations during Covid-19.)

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, was expended to support the medical professionals non-billable time of the psychiatry team. Dr. Cerrato (Medical Director) spent 799.50 hours on non-billable tasks during the entire grant period and our psychiatric nurse practitioner spent 789.50 on non-billable tasks (9-29-20 through end of June 2021.) The total number of nonbillable hours of service provided by the psychiatry team was 1,589 hours.

Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Incorporated - Amount Awarded - \$9,605**Project Name - Breast Cancer Awareness for African American Women of Southern Maryland**

Ivy and Pearls of Southern Maryland Community Charities, Incorporated (IPSMCC) is committed to increasing breast health and breast cancer prevention behaviors in the African American women and underserved women of Southern Maryland. IPSMCC will facilitate breast health and breast cancer education events which will promote preventive behaviors, offer early detection opportunities and support for survivors; reaching at minimum 800 Black/African

American women and underserved women in Charles and St. Mary's Counties. Breast health and breast cancer education events such as 1 forum, 1 fair, 2-3 workshops, 2 virtual challenges, and one-on-one follow-up correspondence (via phone call, postal mail, face-to-face and email) with participants will be provided.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, was expended to pay for participant travel; materials and supplies; publications and marketing; food costs for the forum, fair, and workshops. Results include the conduction of 3 breast cancer awareness forums, 1 breast cancer awareness impact day, 4 distribution events of health-related materials at food giveaways, 5 heart health webinars (healthy eating, physical fitness, and healthy lifestyle choices), development of a commercial to announce the forums, and the development of 7 videos with a breast cancer and heart health focus.

Maintaining Active Citizens, Inc. (MAC, Inc.) - Amount Awarded - \$62,500
Project Name - Living Well: Managing Depression

Maintaining Active Citizens, Inc. (MAC Inc.) mission is to provide programs and services that preserve dignity, health, and independence for an aging population. Their program 'Living Well: Managing Depression' will expand the MAC's Program to Encourage Active and Rewarding Lives (PEARLS) depression management program, implemented by its Living Well Center of Excellence, to serve 100 additional older adults in rural Wicomico, Worcester and Somerset counties. PEARLS is an evidence-based, structured, home-based program that provides older adult participants with tools and strategies to reduce their symptoms of depression. The program offers participants one-on-one sessions with trained PEARLS Counselors to address this under-recognized and often under-treated condition that can significantly impact quality of life for older adults. The project will also provide screening for social isolation of older adults in rural communities, which can contribute to depression and adversely affect overall health. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the project will adjust the process to provide the one-to-one counseling sessions virtually.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, was expended to pay the fee for 100 older adults to be enrolled and complete the PEARLS program. The program reached 143 older adults. In FY 2021, 51% of LWCE participants achieved remission (no longer meet criteria for clinical depression) and 58% achieved response (at least 50% decrease in patient Health Questionnaire-9 (PHQ9) Score for depression). The overall Total Mean Score for depression declined by 50% - from 12.1- 6.5 in FY21. Because of the length of the program (typically 6-8 months), final data is not yet available for all participants.

University of Maryland Eastern Shore Foundation - Amount Awarded - \$100,000
Project Name - COVID-19 Telehealth Intervention: Social isolation, Anxiety, Depression (SAD) in Rural Nursing Homes

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore (UMES) School of Pharmacy is dedicated to developing exemplary pharmacy professionals and scholars who are committed to patient-centered care, lifelong learning, discovery, and service for diverse communities of the Delmarva Peninsula, the State of Maryland, and around the world. The proposed project will focus alleviating the effects of depression for nursing home residents taking a 3-prong approach- I. Workforce Development and Research Capacity: Create a post-doctoral Fellowship in Health Equity and Rural Health to enhance research capacity and findings dissemination among partners and the public. Training and research focus includes health equity and policy, building technical skills and evaluating telehealth delivered intervention outcomes; II. Partners: Collaborations to document existing and developing disparities due to social isolation, anxiety and depression (SAD) magnified by COVID-19. Our proposal joins with federal CARES Act funds to strengthen partners and infrastructure. Partners provide research advice and virtual training sites for a research Fellow and doctoral students; and, III. Vulnerable and Underserved Populations: Create and implement telehealth services to improve resident well-being. This prong enhances abilities to identify and characterize clinical/sub-clinical depression in COVID-19 isolated nursing home residents to include under sampled residents of colors.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, has been expended to support the Rural & Health Equity Fellow position and overall project goals.

Western Maryland Area Health Education Center (dba AHEC West) - Amount Awarded - \$25,000
Project Name - Health Right

The Western Maryland Area Health Education Center (AHEC West) is a rural, community-based organization serving the Appalachian counties of Western Maryland whose mission is to improve access to and promote quality in healthcare through education and collaboration. AHEC West seeks funding to support Health Right, a program that works with local dentists to provide care at deeply discounted rates to adults without health insurance. Services include exams, X-rays, fillings, and extractions with no charge to the client. The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to pay for the salary, wages, and administrative costs of a Dental Case Worker and direct payments to dentists per client.

(Grantees extended project to January 2022. As of January 2021, \$1,150 has been expended on dental treatment. The value of the treatment provided is \$5,813.40. Requests for assistance dropped dramatically after March 2020 because of COVID, and after a period of about 6 months of low applications, an increase in applications was approaching but still not reaching pre-COVID numbers.

Worcester County Health Department - Amount Awarded - \$25,000

Project Name - Worcester County Mobile Integrated Community Health

The Worcester County Health Department's mission is to promote health, well being, and a safe environment in Worcester County. The Health Department does this by assessing community needs; developing appropriate policy to promote health and well-being; and assuring the provision of needed quality health services. Partnering with Atlantic General Hospital and twelve Worcester County Fire and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Departments to provide an integrated care coordination program, the Mobile Integrated Community Health (MICH) program. The MICH team will include a Paramedic, Community Health Nurse, and Community Health Outreach Worker, supported by a Social Worker, Hospital Pharmacist, and Emergency Department (ED) Medical Director. Care coordination activities will include home visits, health and safety assessments, development of a patient-centered plan of care, medication reconciliation, and linkage to socioeconomic resources. The goal of the MICH program is to improve clients overall health by reducing the overuse of EMS and ED services and increasing access to preventive health services.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for the reimbursement to Worcester County Fire and EMS Departments for Paramedic and Lead Paramedic staff providing MICH care coordination services as well as related administration costs for the program. The program has successfully enrolled 26 MICH patients who are receiving continuous care coordination services to promote preventative care and decrease emergency calls and visits. The program received 132 MICH referrals during the grant period.

YMCA of the Chesapeake, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$47,324

Project Name - Expanding Cancer Support & Rehabilitative Services on Maryland's Eastern Shore

The YMCA of the Chesapeake plans to expand cancer support and rehabilitative services on the Eastern Shore of Maryland. If awarded, funding will support the implementation of LiveSTRONG at the YMCA and Enhance Fitness classes in Cecil, Kent/Queen Anne's, Caroline, Talbot, Dorchester, Wicomico, and Worcester/Somerset County. LiveSTRONG supports people affected by cancer in their community by providing a safe and supportive environment to participate in physical and social activities focused on strengthening the whole person. In addition to facilitating classes, the YMCA will work to strengthen their referral network on the Eastern Shore and train and certify new program instructors to support this expansion.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for the salaries and wages for their Chronic Disease Prevention Program Coordinator and the LiveSTRONG class instructors; materials and supplies for class participants; certification training for the Program Coordinator and Class Instructors; and administrative and fringe related staff costs. To date, Enhance Fitness has started, serving a total of 91 participants in the following counties Talbot (2), Dorchester, Kent, Wicomico and Queen Anne's. Seven (7) participants have been served through the LiveStrong program in Talbot and Caroline County. YMCA of the Chesapeake is currently working with the Cancer Center and local physical therapists to increase referrals. Additionally, 14 staff have been trained in LiveStrong in the following counties: Talbot (4), Wicomico (1), Cecil (1), Kent (2), Queen Anne's (1), Caroline (3) and Dorchester (2).

Entrepreneurship - RMPIF

Chesapeake Culinary Center - Amount Awarded - \$5,494

Project Name - Farm to Table

Chesapeake Culinary Center provides cooking classes, culinary job skills training, and incubator-style resources and support for farmers and food-based businesses. The Center plans to triple their output of prepping, blanching and freezing locally sourced produce with the purchase of a commercial food processor and stand. Prepared food will serve Caroline County students during the school year and in the one sheet meals that they provide for a low cost to the community. This service will be available to farmers to process their produce as well.

The RMPIF award was expended to purchase a commercial food processor, blades, and stand. As of June 2021, processing was still taking place for the summer, with a projection of 3,000 more pounds to be produced than last year, if not more.

Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center - Amount Awarded \$25,000

Project Name - Foodtech Technical Assistance Program

The Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC) Will be establishing the Chesapeake Agriculture Innovation Center on Maryland's Eastern Shore with the long-term goal of creating a national resource for the development of innovation and new technologies in agribusiness, which include "Agritech, Aquatech, and Foodtech." This project will focus on the Center providing technical assistance to a diverse range of value-added entrepreneurs that incorporate innovation or technology into the production of their product workshops and programs currently planned, include but are not limited to, the following, Starting as a Craft Alcohol Producer, Regulations 101, Licenses and Permits, Efficiency is innovations - How to Increase Margins; How to Assess Product Mix for Better Merchandizing, Marketing, and Increased Profitability; Tips for Winning Overall Retail Buyers, Market Readiness, and Social Media Marketing; and, Funding Sources for Value Added Producers

The RMPF grant award, along with matching funds, was expended to provide 12 workshops to businesses in the Foodtech industry. As of June 30 2021, ESEC was intended to be part of the Agriculture Innovation Center project for which they were awarded USDA funds in November 2020. The Ag Innovation Center project was put on hold by USDA for several months. In June of 2021, ESEC was instructed by USDA to proceed and are awaiting the signed grant agreement from USDA. Additionally, the website for the Ag Innovation Center will launch mid-August 2021

Eastern Shore Innovation Center - Amount Awarded - \$135,000

Project Name - Hemp Processing Expansion & Research

The Eastern Shore Innovation Center (ESIC) provides a center of technology and business excellence which supports the launch and growth of businesses. ESIC is located in the Dorchester Regional Technology Park that received \$3M in federal funding and the innovation center itself is a key component of the Mid-Shore Regional Council economic adjustment strategy. The purpose of this project is to expand the capability of ESIC's Wet Lab to support a proposed state-wide plan to develop the necessary infrastructure for post-harvest hemp processing. Funding will expand the Innovation Center and SunX analytical's ability to assist the agricultural community in developing markets for their hemp biomass and proceeded materials; continue research effort with university partners to determine best practices for the efficient growth of compliant products; and support a well-defined collaborative research effort with the University of Maryland Extension on the development of hemp fiber production and its utility as ground phosphorus remediator.

The RMPF award, along with matching funds, will support the equipment, infrastructure, and a graduate student salary and wages to implement the expansion of the Innovation Center's Wet Lab. *Grantee Approved an Extension to January 2022.* The following equipment has been purchased toward achieving the results described in the proposal: 2 large -80C freezers, 2 laboratory scales, 4 laboratory benches, candy deposition system, cartridge fill assembly, and a gel cap filling system. Bottle capping and possible upgrades, and a filtration system are pending--negotiations are in progress for procurement:

Frederick Innovative Technology Center, Inc. - Amount Awarded - \$112,500

Project Name - C Suite Program

Frederick Innovative Technology Center Inc (FITCI) is a business incubator/accelerator created to encourage technical innovation and advance the development of commercially viable businesses in Frederick. The C Suite Program will help FITCI's rural MD startups solve the ongoing issue of the lack of vital executive support that is keeping them from properly scaling & growing. Ninety six percent of FITCI founders are the Chief Executive Officers (CEO) of their company. Considering that FITCI's companies are in biotech & tech industries, those Founder CEOs are rarely equipped to lead their startup through the rough first years of business planning, pivoting, pitching and securing investments. Their entrepreneurs would prefer to hire professional support, but they cannot afford skilled executive leadership, especially due to its shortage in rural Maryland. This program will allow FITCI to radically change the business culture for four startup companies, connecting them with a dedicated CEO for a duration of one (1) year. This CEO will not only focus on improving and changing the business aspect of the startup, but will focus on company's sustainability, including finding and training a full-time and long-term CEO replacement.

The RMPF award, along with matching funds, were expended to support the salary and wages for the CEO, apprentices, and FITCI's administrative staff support. The project resulted in the following outcomes, selecting a startup company participant; achieved high participation and diversity within the program; selected and engaged the C-Suite CEO; contracted a law firm and finalized the startup-CEO agreement; planned and executed the Founder City, a three-month conference designed to increase startups' visibility and chances for investment; identified potential investors and started the conversation; the startup participant, CarrTech LLC, received close to \$600,000 in investment with the help of the C-Suite Program CEO; increased startups' visibility and helped with promotion; and, secured additional funds for the C-Suite Program. FITCI secured an additional \$27,852 in grant funding from USDA (Rural Business Development). These funds will be used to provide additional CEO time and resources for one more startup company within the ecosystem.

Maryland Small Business Development Center, Northern Region at Harford Community College

Amount Awarded - \$225,000

Project Name - Technology, Innovation, Manufacturing and Entrepreneurship (TIME) Center

Maryland's Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at Harford Community College is a state and nationwide leader in promoting economic prosperity and entrepreneurship. This project will fund Phase 1 of the Technology, Innovation, Manufacturing and Entrepreneurship Center (TIME), a resource program focused on fulfilling the needs of under-served rural communities, meeting the needs of regional employers, and supporting the advancement of an entrepreneurial mindset throughout the Susquehanna region. The Center will house a fabrication lab for additive manufacturing, simulation space for trade skills, collaboration room for innovation, and training space for workforce development. TIME will accommodate programming that educates and trains a new cadre of highly-skilled workers via pathways for adult learners and high school students, upskills the current workforce for career advancement, and supports entrepreneurs in launching new and accelerating existing businesses. Located within the Boys and Girls Clubs of Harford and Cecil Counties at Edgewood, the facility provides an opportunity to introduce youth to innovation and high-demand careers, while providing greater accessibility to residents along the route 40 corridor.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, was expended to purchase equipment, materials and supplies, publications and marketing, furniture, utilities, facility upgrades for ADA compliance and technology infrastructure, and subcontracts for janitorial services related to COVID-19. The Center officially launched during the Summer of 2021, with a soft opening held on 8/31/2021 for the community and a ribbon-cutting ceremony held on 11/8/2021 for financial and community supporters. Additionally, funds were a catalyst to creating additional funding partnerships. The Ratcliffe Foundation committed \$1.5M in funding for 3 years, these funds will provide scholarships for in-demand higher pay careers; and, the project received a MD Bond Bill of \$160,000, these funds will support a modular unit for additional training room space to focus on cyber and logistics education.

The College of Southern Maryland - Amount Awarded - \$274,000

Project Name - The CSM Velocity Center (VC) at Indian Head

The College of Southern Maryland (CSM) enhances lives and strengthens the economic vitality of a diverse and changing region by providing affordable post-secondary education, workforce development, and cultural and personal enrichment opportunities. The Velocity Center, operated and managed by CSM, will be a place of innovation, learning and collaboration for academia, the Navy and the community. Opening is anticipated in FY2021 to offer more than 10,000 square feet of meeting space (board rooms, customized general session rooms, breakout rooms, a conference center, & a computer lab with 20 workstations). Once opened, it will generate its own revenue and is projected to be a self-sustaining facility by the fourth year of operations.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds supported construction-related expenditures. Funds were spent to purchase the following equipment, technologies, electronics and furnishing supports to outfit the Velocity Center Makerspace: workbenches, 3D printers, CNC router, laser cutter, soldering irons, robotics and VR technologies, 4D scanning, audio visual and electronics training tools. Tables, materials, consumable supplies for 3D printers, storage units and instructional supplies.



Upper Shore Regional Council - Amount Awarded - \$115,140

Project Name - Field Demonstration of Heat Treatment to Eliminate Trade Barriers for Maryland Log Exports

The Upper Shore Regional Council's mission is to foster regional planning and development for Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's Counties; and, to afford federal, state, county and local governments a regional forum to identify issues and opportunities to provide leadership in planning and implementing programs to improve the quality of life in the Upper Shore Region of Maryland. This project will establish the commercial introduction of an emerging technology referred to as "heat treatment (HT)" designed to replace the hazardous fumigant methyl-bromide, phosphene, and sulfuryl fluoride in the treatment of high-value logs and other commodities for export. Developed by researchers at Virginia Tech, in cooperation with USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, HT is an internationally accepted pre-shipment and quarantine phytosanitation for many commodities. HT is an internationally accepted pre-shipment and quarantine phytosanitation for many commodities. This newly developed system applies saturated steam to a vacuum chamber,

effectively killing harmful pests without environmental risk and any adverse effect on log quality. Recent research has confirmed the heat treatment is significantly more effective than insecticide fumigation for the control of pathogens such as oak wilt and thousand canker fungi in oak and walnut logs.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to support the Virginia Tech Shipment Process Study and create a comprehensive report, Heat Treatment chamber rental, and administrative costs associated with the project. Because of a delay in the authorization of the international shipment of the logs, the Field Demonstration of Heat Treatment to Eliminate Trade Barriers for Maryland Log Exports project has been delayed.

Infrastructure - RMPIF

City of Crisfield - Amount Awarded - \$64,250

Project Name - Crisfield Armory

The City has plans to renovate the historic Armory in order to create space for youth and adult activities to include a gymnasium for indoor sports, meeting space for community groups, and, an exhibit to honor the historical use of the building. In 2019, Somerset County completed a Condition Assessment and Feasibility Study of the Armory and estimated the total project cost at \$4.3 million and 5 to 10 years to complete.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were used for engineering costs, associated asbestos and mold remediation, roof repair and replacement, and any remaining funds used for first and second floor renovations. As of June 2021, the City of Crisfield hired Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc (DBF) as the engineering firm to begin work for the project. DBF began work on developing the Asbestos Abatement on October 20, 2020. A&I, Inc. was awarded the bid on the project. Work on the Asbestos Abatement began March 2021 and was completed April 2021. DBF is ready to proceed on roof repair and replacement. Not all Funds have been expended; it is expected that this project may take 5-10 years to complete and still in the beginning phases.

Pocomoke City - Amount Awarded - \$150,000

Project Name - Pocomoke City Pump Station Replacements (4 Pump Stations) - Pre Construction/Engineering Cost

Due to outdated pumping technology, specifically, pneumatic ejectors, Pocomoke City has experienced significant issues with their outdated wastewater pump stations located throughout the city on Dorchester Avenue, Payne Avenue, Cedar Street and 10th Street & Market Street. The is planning to convert the 4 existing underground pump station structures into wet wells and install submersible pumps, rails, valves, and controls but first they need to complete required pre construction scope of services, which is estimated to be completed in 6 to 9 months. These services will include, the completion of a site survey; an estimate of the station capacities; the pump selection/curves, preparation of drawings; the coordination w/EE; the production of a project manual; the construction permit application; addressing the Maryland Department of the Environment comments, and meeting(s) with the City officials and Pocomoke City's selected contractor.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to pay for the pre-construction scope of services.

The Grantees have approved an Extension to December of 2022. As of January 2021, the following scopes of services have been completed; completed a site survey, estimated station capacities, determined pump selection and curves, prepared drawings, coordinated with an electrical sub-consultant, and attended meetings with Pocomoke City employees to discuss the progress of this project;

Talbot County Department of Public Works - Amount Awarded - \$426,000

Project Name - Goldsborough Neck Road and Drainage Improvements Phase 1C and ID

In 2018, the Town of Easton began developing the 86.25-acre Mistletoe Hall Commerce-Business Park in order to support new and existing businesses. In partnership with the Town of Easton, Talbot County committed to widening and improving a portion of Goldsborough Neck Road to allow for increased truck traffic associated with this development. Phase 1A and 1B, both funded through previous RMPIF grants, have reached completion and Phase 1C is ready to commence. Phase 1C will include a total length of the roadway widening and drainage improvements approximately 1,680 feet.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, will be utilized for the salary, wages, and benefits for the Talbot County Roads Department's time dedicated to Phase 1C and materials for construction-sand/fill, gravel, and asphalt. There have been delays in securing the right-of-way for the road widening. Once the right-of-way has been secured, Talbot County can finalize the design and seek all the required permits needed to allow for the road to be widened. Talbot County will work to secure all permits by the end of 2021 with the goal of initiating construction of the road widening in early 2022.

Smith Island United - Amount Awarded - \$100,000
Project Name - Smith Island: Somers Road and Wharf Street Drainage Projects

Smith Island United (SIU) is a grassroots organization that was formed with the mission to preserve Smith Island-its people, culture, and natural beauty. SIU plans to improve their stormwater management systems as laid out in a Department of Natural Resources comprehensive drainage assessment plan. The plan recommends four major drainage system upgrades, and this project will focus on two of them-Somer's Road and Wharf Street. The Somers Road project includes an upgrade of the existing culverts, a regrade of the entire roadside ditch, and the installation of a TideFlex valve. The Wharf Street project includes the conversion of an existing, poorly performing roadside ditch into a green infrastructure stormwater best management practice through the regrading of the roadside ditch; eradication of phragmites; and installation of Flexi-pave and #57 stone base.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, will be utilized to pay for the project design and survey work, green infrastructure, construction materials, and implementation. *Approved an Extension to January 2022.* As of January 2021, the specifications for the project have been drafted and approved, homeowner easements have been obtained for all work along ditches that are on private property, all required MDE permit applications have been prepared and submitted to MDE for review and approval, and the DHCD CDBG required Environmental Review has been conducted. Additionally, the Request for Proposals (RFP) has been advertised and two local firms attended the mandatory pre-bid meeting. The project was to be awarded in May with a start date of June 1, 2021

Town of Hancock - Amount Awarded - \$62,961
Project Name - Town of Hancock Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

The Town's current water system is in critical disrepair and this project will create a new fresh potable water system that will lay the groundwork for all water infrastructure projects for the near future. The project contains the following four components: construction of secondary well; Town-wide leak audit; Subsurface mapping; Replacement of water mains on South Street.

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, were expended to pay for the salaries, wages, administrative costs of the Town Department of Public Works staff time dedicated to the project; operating equipment; construction; the Town-wide lead audit; engineering design; and comprehensive mapping. As of January 2021, the complete engineering study, design, permits and bid documents have been prepared; a contractor has been selected and are preparing the contract with Advantage Landscape and Construction from Hagerstown.

Town of Hurlock - Amount Awarded - \$45,100
Project Name - Construction of Metal Public Works Building

The Town of Hurlock is a full-service municipal corporation located in Dorchester County and provides planning and zoning, economic development, parks and recreation, water and sewer, street maintenance, and police protection services to a population of 2,033. The Town of Hurlock is seeking to construct a new public works and water service building as their current one is in advanced deterioration. The proposed new building will be used to store equipment, machinery, and other materials that would be used by the town government (E.g. piping, supplies, tools, plumbing equipment, snowplows, and supplies and equipment used to provide water service).

The RMPIF award, along with matching funds, will be expended to support the construction of a new metal public works building. Construction costs include the demolition of the old building, the construction of the new 80' x 100' building; concrete work; and electricity.

Denied Funds
Sagepoint Senior Services Foundation Amount Awarded - \$48,100
Project Name - Retention of Long Term Care Workforce in Southern Maryland

Regional Councils

One-third of RMPIF supports the State's five regional councils: Tri-County Council of Western Maryland, Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland, Upper Shore Regional Council, Mid-Shore Regional Council, and the Tri-County Council of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland. Regional Council activities funded through this Fund, include: 1.Equity lending 2.Transportation software and systems 3. Regional agricultural development and education 4. Economic and small business development activities 5. Rural economic research.

Mid-Shore Regional Council
Amount Awarded \$390,164.00

The Grantee expended RMPIF funds, alongside matching funds, to:

1. Provide for costs for consulting services, including:

- Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC): Funds are for administrative overhead associated with providing technical assistance to entrepreneurs and startup businesses, as well as planning and development of programs and activities for the benefit of participating entrepreneurs and startup businesses. This resulted in 37 entrepreneurs being mentored and coached; 7 companies trained in Business Model Mapping programs; 17 attendees to Investor Pitch training programs; 5 companies completed e F³ Tech PreAccelerator program. Additionally, recruited in excess of 400 applications for 4th cohort were to start in September
- Shore Gourmet/Chesapeake Culinary Center: Funds are to assist and enable the efforts of a Program Director and a Product Development Manager that are employed full time by the Chesapeake Culinary Center. Their efforts will be to diversify the market through niche crops, provide assistance in getting products approved through government agencies, and promote value added merchandise with farmers, entrepreneurs, and consumers. 10 businesses and individual received assistance or consultation on business development and planning; 6 local businesses toured the incubator kitchen; provided 750,000 sealed meals to families in need during COVID; 20,000 pounds of local produce was processed for the Caroline County Public Schools; established a group with Maryland Agriculture, DNR and various nonprofits; and lastly, a seafood distributor and seafood processor is to begin making the invasive Blue Catfish a profitable industry for watermen and the private sector
- DelMarVa Index: With the guidance of the MSRC and TCCLES, the ESRGC will further develop the Delmarva Index (an economic development data repository) to include more functionality and updated resources. Additional value will be added to the Index through the inclusion of infographics, website upgrades, Economic Dashboard updates, and more granular data, while engaging in the promotion of the tool. Project results include updates to the Economic Dashboard; completed StoryMap's for Talbot County and Somerset County; 521 infographics created; added 10 new features to the Delmarva Index website and catalog; and the growth of the @DelmarvaIndex Twitter account, and creation of a You Tube Page
- GIS Circuit Rider: The ESRGC will provide on-location assistance to Mid-Shore counties and local jurisdictions by employing a part-time Circuit Rider to travel to and assist jurisdictions in all three counties of the Mid-Shore with GIS-related projects, troubleshooting and other support. To date, completed GIS consultation on ArcGIS for Server setup and optimization in Dorchester County; prepared and presented Housing Study data for the Town of Easton and The Hill Community; development and hosting of The Hill StoryMap to assist with tourism in Talbot County; and development and distribution of Countywide 1-foot topographic contour data.
- Online CEDS: Update CEDS document and present it in a digital format that is consumable by a variety of audiences. Static and interactive data displays will be used to enhance the CEDS document as well as create an online StoryMap to include a narrative component and updated visual component to the CEDS documentation. Results include the development of the StoryMap design and theme; transfer of all existing content from the existing pdf CEDS to the new online format; and migration of all static charts, graphs and tables to a digital dashboard equivalent.
- Special GIS Projects: Assist local jurisdictions within the Mid-Shore region with GIS related project support on 1-2 special projects, including but not limited to COVID-related issues. Housing quality studies started in June 2021 and are being conducted over the summer.
- Annie's Project: The University of Maryland Extension will execute Annie's Project, which focuses on many aspects of farm management and is designated to empower women in overall farm decision making and to build local networks throughout the state. The program encompasses six evening sessions that cover the five areas of Risk Management – Production, Marketing, Financial, Legal Risk, and Human Resources. Additionally, programming for Annie's Project will include a tour to three farms to learn more about agriculture operations and two recordkeeping and bookkeeping classes that include hands on practice with computer software such as Excel and Quickbooks. The course is open to everyone. As of June 30th, 2021, there was a delay given the circumstances of COVID 19 cancellations. University of Maryland Extension was able to change programs and provide virtual education through a number of channels. They provided 8 monthly newsletters and 2 Facebook posts per week. Annie's Project was postponed, but there had been a lot of interest in a class, resulting in an online class being created that is in the final stages. Additionally, Wednesday webinars were also held 2x a month and the Annual Conference was held virtually with 152 participants.
- Provide funds for Regional Marketing: The MSRC will be participating in the regional marketing effort Taste of the Eastern Shore (TOTES) held in Annapolis.

Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore

Amount \$390,164.00

Scope of Work Summary: As a cooperative regional planning and development agency, the Tri-County Council for the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland has several key initiatives and partnerships, and will utilize the RMPIF award to implement the following nine collaborative projects:

- Worcester County Step Up and Reach for the Stars STEM Camp, Leadership Cohort, and Internship Program: The Council continued to provide extra-curricular education opportunities for youth through placement in Worcester County's summer Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) enrichment program. Funds were used for placement of additional students in the program.
- Worcester County Economic Development Skilled Trades Agriculture Tourism (STAT) Program: The Worcester STAT internship program (WSTAT-IP) is a work-based learning experience that provides high school students and recent graduates from Worcester County an opportunity to explore Skilled Trades, Agriculture, or Tourism related careers via paid internships, co-sponsored by Worcester County and the TCLESMD. Funds expended to match students and STAT employers for internship opportunities at no cost to the employer. Each participant will receive 100 instructional hours.
- Summer Youth Employment: Place youth in summer employment programs in Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. Funds were spent to place 25 students in employment and the balance to cover some staff costs as well as travel, supplies and background checks. The project resulted in 19 students participating in Somerset and Wicomico Counties. Worcester County had the funds and was preparing their program for summer 2021.
- M4Reactor STEM Maker Space: Provide STEM oriented education and training to youth and adults that will include but is not limited to providing a mobile "makerspace" to introduce STEM Careers to K-12 during the school period; providing hands-on educational activities in STEM technologies during after school/summer periods; providing training to appropriate use as well as skill training on STEM technologies to adults; and provide job growth/retention in entrepreneur and trade skills job through events/classes/cohorts. The outcome was 3 Youth Education Events providing 300 student hours, 18 Maker/DIY Skills Education classes/events providing 381 student hours, and 6 Trade Skills Education event/cohorts providing 254 student hours
- Project Opportunity: Support Project Opportunity- free entrepreneurship training program for veterans, active duty and reserve personnel, military spouses, and veteran small business owners with classes throughout Maryland. The Council provided funds for website update, maintenance and support in order to increase efficiency in website loading time and provided the ability for web-based conferences.
- Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center (ESEC): The Council will foster the entrepreneurial ecosystem of the Lower Shore with programs and technical assistance provided by the Eastern Shore Entrepreneurship Center. Personnel of the Center will mentor and coach entrepreneurs and startups (coached 29 entrepreneurs); administer hotDesks coworking space locations in Pocomoke and Salisbury (currently 19 members, to include 7 new members), Pocomoke location closed); plan, develop, and execute F3 Tech Accelerator Program (was going through due diligence prior to the final selection of 5 companies for Fall 2021, cohort to start September 2021).
- Start two business model mapping programs; (no registrations for first event, 7 attendees for second event); two Investor Pitch training programs (17 Attendees); two Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR)/Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) workshops (No registrations in November 2020, same result in April 2021 because of Covid restrictions); assist in planning and executing of Shore Hatchery investment competition and the execution of Bernstein Competition at Salisbury University (assisted SU with Fall 2020 & Spring 2021 Shore Hatchery, awarded \$15,000 in technical assistance to one student business). These funds are for administrative overhead associated with providing technical services to entrepreneurs and startup businesses as well as planning and development of programs and activities for the benefit of participating.
- Telamon Corporation, One Stop Café and FAST Program: Expended funds to implement the FAST program-a fulltime 16-week job training with educational and supportive services in a working café setting. Training includes work readiness, computer literacy, financial education and coaching, and hands-on culinary based instruction. The project resulted in 75% of recent graduates maintaining full time employment using resources and support services from FAST, and providing over 110 volunteer hours at community meals kitchen.
- Regional Marketing and Branding as a Component of Rural Economic Development: The Council continued its economic development partnerships to grow market awareness of the Lower Eastern Shore of Maryland (LESMD) through regional marketing and branding. This included the creation of LESMD.org and the selection of 54 individuals for the Tri-County Council Regional branding Marketing and committee.
- Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC): The Eastern Shore Regional GIS (Geographic Information Systems) Cooperative will continue the development of the DelMarVa Index, an online repository of demographic, economic, geographic, and social data. ESRGC will further refine and develop the functioning economic development data repository. Additionally, expand access to GIS technology to underserved areas of the Lower Eastern Shore and complete housing study for Snow Hill and Pocomoke City. To date, ESRGC was establishing contact with counties and jurisdictions. Additionally, five GIS products have been developed and delivered to jurisdictions of Berlin, Crisfield, Ocean City, and Somerset County.

Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland

Amount Awarded \$390,164

Scope of Work Summary:

As a cooperative regional planning and development agency the Tri-County Council for Southern Maryland (TCCSMD) has several key initiatives and partnerships and will utilize the RMPIF award to implement the following ten collaborative projects: *Grantee approved an Extension to January of 2022. Results as of January 2021*

The Grantee will expend RMPIF Funds for ten (10) projects:

Transportation Projects.

- Southern Maryland Mobility Management Healthcare Transportation: TCCSMD's Wheels to Wellness (W2W) program offers dependable transportation to senior citizens, the disabled, and those dependent on public services that are unable to access necessary medical services. TCCSMD will utilize funding to expand transportation to dialysis centers, and to expand travel outside of the Tri-County Council area (Calvert, Charles, St. Mary's Counties) for specialized treatments to the Washington DC and Baltimore area, and treatments within Southern Maryland. The W2W program had a 25% ride increase before stopping on January 25, 2020.
- Broadband Assessment Mapping: Due to COVID, TCCSMD will fund a consultant position to map and define areas that are served or underserved by adequate broadband communication as quality broadband is critical for telework and distance learning. This critical mapping will allow leaders to target broadband upgrades. Funds will be used to hire a consultant to update broadband map for Tri-County Area and define targeted broadband upgrades.

Southern Maryland Agricultural Development Commission

- Maryland Market Money Program: TCCSMD will provide support to the Southern Maryland Agriculture Development Commission (SMADC) in order for the Commission to take over the Maryland Market Money (MMM) program. MMM works with farmer's markets in Southern Maryland and across the state to provide funds, via a combination of county, state, grant, and fundraising money to provide low income Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and Senior Citizen customers with additional money to match their federal benefits, and to bring in additional income for the farmers. SMADC will partner with Maryland Agriculture Resource Based Industry Corporation (MARBIDCO) to manage the program. To date, SMADC was able to relaunch the program under new management.
- Forest Industry Marketing Campaign and Education Program: TCCSMD will provide support to SMADC to collaborate with the agricultural marketing firm Grow & Fortify to create a marketing campaign and education program to promote the forest industry in Maryland. To date, planning meetings with Grow and Fortify that include DNR staff have taken place, and potential businesses have been listed.

Workforce Development Programs

- Workforce Development Programs: TCCSMD will expand their Workforce Development Program to provide additional career exploration, career readiness training, soft skills training, and hard skills training that leads to the attainment of industry recognized credentials for the citizens of the region. This program affords businesses the ability to upskill their current workforce and have access to a more robust pipeline of skilled workers.
- Skillup® Southern Maryland: TCCSMD will support the Skillup® online platform that is designed to help the Southern Maryland Region build a workforce ecosystem that supports positive economic development. The platform will be available to all Southern Maryland citizens to explore career pathways, assess career interests and aptitudes, and develop basic skills. Since 2008, Metrix Learning, has been used to meet the virtual career service needs of Workforce Development Boards, Departments of Labor, businesses, and colleges. Through the SkillUp® Southern Maryland Program, TCCSMD will be able to offer an unlimited number of area residents access to the Metrix Learning Platform. To date, the platform was purchased and launched. In the 10 days since the purchase, over 100 individuals have registered and are participating in trainings

Southern Maryland Heritage Area Consortium

- Destination Southern Maryland Regional Marketing: in 2019, the Destination Southern Maryland website <https://destinationsouthernmaryland.com/> proved to be a great success with providing an online resource for regional marketing and attracting visitors and local residents to destinations in Calvert, Charles, and St. Mary's County. TCCSMD will provide funds for a consultant to continue building on the strengths of this website and increase presence on social media. Additionally, funds will be used to support regional marketing and promotion of Southern Maryland through staff event attendance and marketing materials. To date, the website has been enhanced, and social media platforms have been launched and managed (Facebook and Instagram); 30,000 brochures are being distributed; and the continuation of virtual attendance at conferences, national forums and marketplaces.
- National Heritage Area Initiative: TCCSMD will utilize funds to hire and retain a consultant to focus on the National Heritage Area designation, an initiative that began in 2019. The consultant will conduct a comprehensive and inclusionary feasibility study that will determine the viability of this national designation for the Southern Maryland Heritage Area. To date, a national consultant firm was secured to guide the required Feasibility Study; a National Heritage Area Steering Committee was formed; and three (3) community conversations were held.

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- Piscataway Conoy Initiative: TCCSMD will utilize funds to continue supporting the initiative for the Piscataway Conoy Tribe to have a designated cultural center and museum. Materials purchased will include the printing and promotion of the concept design, and assistance with fundraising efforts. This project was stalled due to COVID-19. It is beginning again with outside, socially distanced meetings and engagement. The Concept Design is completed and a printer/designer has been identified.

Tri-County Council Capacity Building

- Public Relations and Outreach: Increase social media presence. TCCSMD will continue to contract with Platinum Public Relations to assist with website functionality and public relation efforts. In the first few months, Facebook "reach" has increased over 500%.

Tri-County County for Western Maryland

Amount \$390,164

Scope of Work Summary

As a cooperative regional planning and development agency the Tri County Council of Western Maryland (TCCWMD) has several key initiatives and partnerships and will utilize the RMPF award to implement the following projects: Summit Financing Solutions: Enhance TCCWMD loan fund program to better serve the needs of the business and entrepreneurial community, creating and retaining jobs with a focus on ensuring that existing businesses have access to the capital they need to survive and thrive due to the COVID pandemic. *Extension to January 2022*

- Certified Development Company: TCCWMD will continue to pursue becoming a Certified Development Company (CDC) under the name, Summit Development Corporation. The Council will ensure that staff hold sufficient professional education to administer a CDC, including membership in the National Association of Development Companies (NADCO). These actions will allow the organization to process additional lending applications and leverage additional funds. The Council will also continue its Revolving Loan Fund activities as well as provide technical assistance to small businesses.
- Technical Assistance for Professional Services: TCCWMD will provide technical assistance for professional services to small businesses in their region. Services include but are not limited to financial and accounting services, website development and enhancement, and specialized trainings.
- Marketing: Focus on the establishment and maintenance of relationships from network of partners statewide that work in gap financing programs by hosting one-on-one meetings, further developing an existing partner database, and, continuing to distribute a commercial lender e-newsletter.
- TCCWMD New Headquarters: TCCWMD plans to purchase and renovate an existing building in the region. This endeavor will allow the Council to own real estate in lieu of renting which will allow for the redirecting of funds to be directed into needed program areas.
- Administration: TCCWMD will utilize the grant award to provide for the administration of the grant; salaries and fringe benefits for staff in support of economic development activities related to the Council and Summit Development Corporation; local travel to visit clients, marketed the CDC, visited lending institutions, and trained on best practices for CDC and revolving loan fund administration; software and office equipment; materials and supplies; staff attendance at training courses for NADCO, events and webinars of the Council of Development Finance Agencies and the Economic Development Finance Service, and other necessary training to manage the Summit Development Corporation.

Will expend RMPF funds, alongside matching funds, to:

Provide for the administration of the grant. Provide for salaries and fringe benefits for staff in support of Economic Development activities related to the Council and Summit Development Corporation (CDC). Provide for local travel to visit clients, market the CDC, visit lending institutions, and for training on best practices for CDC and revolving loan fund administration. Provide for software and office equipment. Provide for staff attendance at training courses of NADCO, events and webinars of the Council of Development Finance Agencies and the Economic Development Finance Service, and other necessary training to manage the Summit Development Corporation. Provide technical assistance to small businesses. Provide capital for lending to small businesses in Maryland. Subscribe to the CDC Bulletin Service and obtain client credit reports. Maintain membership in the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). Provide for promotional materials for the Council's lending programs and the new CDC. Provide funds for the purchase and renovation of a new building for TCCWMD.

As of January 2021, TCCWMD only received 2 applications for loans, but it is anticipated that as businesses reopen from the COVID-19 pandemic that there will be a need for working capital. Technical assistance grants generally are awarded to companies that have new loans with the Council which explains the lack of requests.

Work continues with the development of the CDC but are cautious in making an application due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the complexities of the program, current staff training challenges, and organizing a new board for the 501c3 during these difficult times. It is also believed that SBA has experienced a need to adapt many of their programs for stimulus programs, including the 504-program administered by the CDCs. It would be very difficult to establish a new program under these circumstances.

Upper Shore Regional Council

Amount \$390,164

In Fiscal Year 2021, the Upper Shore Regional Council (USRC), a regional economic development and planning agency, will look to support the acceleration of existing initiatives in the counties that are aligned with the regional priorities of the Council while utilizing resources for issues that have a regional focus and impact. Emphasis will continue to be on strengthening the agriculture economy, increasing regional tourism, strengthening and developing small businesses, addressing transportation concerns as well as enhancing public/private partnerships. The USRC concentrated on the following opportunities to increase business development and retention in the Upper Shore Region and embark on other priority projects which enhance the quality of life for Upper Shore residents:

Scope of Work Summary

Projects funded (either in part or entirety) with RMPF funds included:

- Conduction of a feasibility study and implementation plan for becoming a Certified Development Corporation (CDC). CDC certification allows the Council to process additional lending applications and leverage additional funds.
- Market the Upper Shore Agricultural Equity Incentive Matching Fund tool to the agricultural sector in the region. The program is designed to incentivize loan requests from Upper Shore farmers, and to help them meet certain down-payment requirements of lenders to help improve the credit quality of their applications. To date, the project was renamed the USRC Farm Incentive Fund; farm bureau meetings were attended in the three counties; met with Economic Development staff of the three counties, and met with each of the Chambers of Commerce in the three counties.
- Create the Upper Shore Micro Ag-Grant program to utilize funds for projects focusing on marketing, technology innovation research and/or implementation, and animal welfare improvements. The project resulted in the creation of the Upper Shore Agriculture Marketing Mini grants. Kent was able to award the entire \$28,000 in funding. Cecil was able to provide some funding to all 16 applications and the entire \$28,000 was allocated; Queen Anne's had 7 successful applications and a successful pilot program and will be repeated in FY22.
- Encourage entrepreneurship throughout the Upper Shore by partnering with Chesapeake College, the Small Business Development Center, and Office of Economic Development (OED) to create a hybrid entrepreneurship/hot desk program. This was unfortunately postponed because of Covid
- Implement the second year of the Oyster Rotational Harvest Pilot program which entails planting spat in a reserved area that will be open in the future for wild harvest. The program resulted in Over 14 million Oyster spat planted.
- Support Cecil Cares, a countywide day of service, coordinated by Cecil County Department of Community Services (DCS) for the purpose of 1) helping residents meet community needs through acts of service; 2) fostering relationships between organizations, volunteers, and businesses; and 3) creating a sense of community pride and spirit.
- Creation of a "data story" for Kent and Queen Anne's counties. Now linked to the USRC's website
- Support Kent and Queen Anne's Counties efforts to educate students and parents on the career opportunities in the trade fields; examine the viability of a "trade liaison" to work with the public school system, existing businesses, and workforce; create a workforce development plan; and provide a forum to discuss the next step for a regional technology school. In January, a job description was created and approved by both counties. In February, the job was advertised and applications were accepted through February 19, 2021. In June, the trade Liaison position was renamed Career Technical Liaison.
- Expanding the coverage of the Harvest Directory to include micro-breweries and wineries. This was accomplished by updating Harvest Directory website.
- Improve utilization of USRC created marketing tools to broaden reach, and partner with Eastern Shore based regional councils on the Taste of the Eastern Shore annual event. This was unfortunately postponed because of Covid
- Partner with the Susquehanna Workforce Network (SWN) to develop a creative solution to address the lack of job transportation for graduates of training program. Support the training of young adults and low skill residents for warehouse and distribution jobs-growing industry in Cecil County through the Network. Some of these funds were allocated to assist the CCPL with creating a mobile technology lab. The library had their first community event involving the mobile tech library.
- Partner with 4-H organizations in Cecil, Kent, and Queen Anne's County to increase education, training, and mentoring of regional youth to work in the agricultural field. To date, has followed up with Paul Rickert of the UM Extension Office, who is planning videos with 4H Alumni, encouraging students to pursue Ag Careers.
- Fund a GIS Circuit Rider through a partnership with the Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC). The Circuit Rider position will be available to travel to jurisdictions throughout the Upper Shore and provide specialized solutions to data analysis needs. To date, has signed contract with ESRGC to provide a GIS circuit rider for the Upper Shore region; contracted with Platinum PR to help roll out a new campaign to advertise the ESRGC Circuit Rider; reached out to all three counties and all municipalities to offer services; and is working on web mapping applications.
- Assist regional transportation needs through organizational support, expending funds for new Transportation and Housing position in Kent County, and providing access to the MapDash data system. To date, have hired a transportation and housing coordinator, and a firm was hired to begin a marketing campaign focused on transportation in Kent County.



Mission

The Rural Maryland Foundation's Mission is to support efforts of citizens and governments meet the economic and social needs of rural Maryland; to serve as the Maryland Rural Development Council if the Rural Maryland Council ceases to function in that role; and to support the efforts of the Rural Maryland Council.



We Are Rural Maryland Advertisement on YouTube

We Are Rural Maryland Television Ad

The campaign included a combination of digital and TV advertisements for the Northern Maryland media market. The total cost was \$8,000 for 250,000 impressions, 1647 total commercials on TV and 64,516 streaming commercials on digital devices starting in September 2020. The campaign was important because it replaced the normal outreach that the Council is not able to conduct due to the pandemic. Potential goals of the campaign were 3,000 views, 150 new contacts, 10-15% increase in web traffic to site, 5 to 10 new memberships, and 5 to 10 inquiries.

Scholarship

The LEAD Maryland Fellowship Program (a University of Maryland Extension Signature Program) is provided through a collaborative effort between the LEAD Maryland Foundation and the University of Maryland Extension, along with many other organizations, businesses and individuals that work to fund, plan, implement and evaluate the program and its activities. LEAD Maryland Foundation, Inc. is dedicated to identifying and developing leadership to serve agriculture, natural resources, and rural communities. The LEAD Program awards a two-year fellowship to selected participants, creating classes of 20-25 emerging leaders. The LEAD Fellowship curriculum focuses on providing public issues education, skills building, leadership development, and personal growth.

In the Future

The Rural Maryland Foundation has plans to release both an updated development plan and strategic plan for the Foundation. The goals of the planning will be to identify what the current goals of the Foundation should be moving forward, as well as how the Foundation can continue to adequately assist the RMC and its mission to provide a better standard of living for rural Marylanders.

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